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Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[For information on the Molimo and Elima religious associations, see category 575.]

detail. All her work has the indisputable advantage of being a factual record of personal observation of a single hunting band over a period of eight consecutive years. That she is not an anthropologist is to a great extent mitigated by the fact that her record confines itself to her observations, and by the training she received from her husband. Nonetheless this factor should be taken into consideration, particularly as her previous training was as an artist. This accounts in part for the detailed and accurate descriptions of what she saw, but it also accounts for her sometimes highly imaginative presentation of the facts. For instance, when she hears the *molimo* horn at night, she (1954, 84) writes: "Where the Esamba roamed, there went death. Its eerie, lowing voice was the voice of evil." In fact this, as well as being a statement of her own interpretation of the *molimo*, is also an accurate picture of the villager interpretation. It is also significant that she uses specifically village terms, such as "Esamba" (for the more correct *lusumba* or *esumba*). Living as she did among the villagers as well as among the Pygmies, Mrs. Putnam was influenced by many of their notions and not infrequently used the villagers as informants, though she always states when the latter is the case. We must then assume that

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[P. 157-D]

[ARCHERS]

The southern archers affirm that they always used to burn their corpses. Nowadays the burial takes place beside the hut of the deceased, and the corpse, covered with a cloth, is passed out through an opening made in the side of the hut. It is placed in a hole in the ground, covered with bark and earth. The hut is then pulled down over the tomb, and household utensils are added to the pile. Mourning is profound and sincere among men and women, but ritual dances of mourning, such as those practiced by villager women, are unknown.[2] P 764 P [765] [535] [114]

In "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri" Schebesta (1948, 543) gives details of a funeral he attended in a southern Lese village, and of an archer funeral, and compares the two. The archer funeral was of an old Mbuti who died after a short attack of smallpox. Schebesta received the news at six o'clock the morning following the death. On reaching the camp he found the corpse laid out in a new cloth, inside the hut. Nearby crouched the widow and eldest daughter. All the womenfolk of the camp were gathered outside the hut, crying and moaning. The eldest son had gone to the village to inform his father's *karé* (p. 179), and within two hours returned with three villagers, wailing. Meanwhile the Pygmies had agreed that the grave should be dug beside the hut. The most promi- P M 764 177 P M [608]

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[2] This statement, again, is totally contrary to my experience among both archers and net hunters.

[P 182-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.223-C]

the official wailing, as well as before or after it. 152

Anne Putnam (1954, 77) mentions the opinion 764
of a Pygmy hunter concerning the village 829
custom of burying the dead in a cemetery. He
is reported as saying, "There the ground locks
everyone's arms together and it isn't comfortable."

She also refers (1954, 81) to village speechmaking 763
following a burial, during which the 761
cause of the death is hinted at. On one occasion, [754]
the death of a young Pygmy girl in the village,
the villagers attributed the calamity to the evil-eye
and roused a relative of the girl to vow vengeance.
The next morning, however, the Pygmies 765 •
all went hunting, despite the assurance of 177
the villagers that it was dangerous to go hunting 224
for three days after any death and that no
game would fall into their nets. Four antelope
were caught.

[NET HUNTERS]

575 and refused to come to the camp. Some of the
533 men tried to find it, but, as they went after it,
534 it stayed silent for a while, then suddenly was
782 heard on the other side of the camp.

Anne Putnam gives one other instance of this
796 kind of meeting. While the evening meal was
being eaten, the trumpet was heard and all the
women had to shut themselves up. The trumpet
approached the camp, and the men ran out to
greet it, shouting and beating the drums. The
trumpet came right into the clearing. Mrs. Putnam
heard much shouting, drumming, hunting
cries, and swishing of branches. The trumpet
made a quick tour of the circle of huts and was
then heard to disappear into the distance. The
women were called out. The men were busy
[823] dancing. The women cooked a large meal, and
the men all drank salt water so that they would
sing well. They sang until about midnight. The
trumpet was heard again for a short time early
in the morning, in the distance.

The occasion for this *molimo* meeting, which
575 lasted about a month, was poor hunting. However,
533 an old woman died during the month.
• 765 Anne Putnam was told that if the *molimo* had
796 not already been meeting, they would have had
to call it out for this occasion. They also explained
that the woman's death was the reason

[P. 227-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.227-C]

for the particularly long and intense singing at that time. 575 533 765 796

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of the *molimo*,[1] the occasion for which was not clear and which took place down near the village. One villager took part. The trumpet and the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared behind one of the huts. As the playing and singing proceeded, the villager and one or two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them against the door of the hut behind which the trumpet was playing. There was much laughter, but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally, the player and trumpet were carried away as they arrived, and everyone went to bed. 575 534 533 796 [114]

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have witnessed were of the more serious kind, following the general disruption in the district among villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam died. At these meetings no drums were used, even though they were sometimes available. But even at such meetings there was generally a period, early in the night, during which the men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene dance around the fire, with much laugh- 765 533 [534] [535] [831]

[NET HUNTERS]

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, 765
and the women were still chattering, though 533
shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition. 575 881 796 533 [534] [765]

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the 173 534 825 562

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[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

These Mbuti, however, just as much as others, Z
appear to have adopted villager religious 563
beliefs and practices. This could be taken as 796
symptomatic of a much closer relationship involving P
a shared system of values. We cannot 177
help noticing, further, that by retaining a monopoly 796
of ritual specialists the villagers effectively
seem to assert their superiority over the P
Mbuti. When birth or death takes place among Z
the Mbuti while they are in the vicinity of the [844]
village, the local villagers take a prominent part [764]
in the appropriate festivities, appropriate according [765] •
to their custom, that is. Marriage between P
Pygmies, while not always subject to 583
ceremonial "ratification" in the village, is usually 585
performed twice: once according to the 177
simple Mbuti custom of arranging and effecting Z
an exchange of brides with the necessary courtesies 563
of prestation and feasting but with no 585
other ceremonial; and once according to the

[P.251-D]

Upon establishing what was, for me, the first hunting camp of the 123
year, there commenced what I might here call the real mourning festivities, 114
as opposed to the festivities imposed upon the Mbuti when 764
in the village. One of the persons to die had been an old and much 765
respected and beloved Mbuti lady, Balekimito. Her death was made
the occasion for a great *molimo* festival, which within the first three
months of my field trip brought me right to the heart of the Mbuti
magico-religious system. Subsequent investigation elsewhere, even [184]
among archer bands, revealed a degree of similarity that makes it
possible to generalize widely from the base of this single band study,
in this realm at least.

I followed the same band throughout its entire series of migrations, 114
living in every camp it established during the course of some 166
fourteen months. During this time the band was sometimes entirely in residence in the Epulu village, in which case I was there with it; on occasion it was entirely in the forest, and sometimes it was divided between the two. When it divided I simply had to distribute my attentions as the occasion seemed to demand. Sometimes I was able to make use of an informant in the other division, and I trained three Mbuti youths for this purpose.

On two occasions I was able to take quick side trips to other parts 114
of the forest, but I left the bulk of my search for comparative material
among other bands until I felt that one complete annual cycle had
been completed. It so happened that the process of fission and fusion [126]
was more systemized than I had anticipated, and my records of consecutive changes in the composition of the hunting band clearly showed the pattern in time for me to be able to spend a few months in different parts of the forest, with both net-hunters and archers, and even allowed me to make a brief excursion to the Kivu district and to Ruanda and Burundi, though the material gathered there was not immediately comparable.

FIELD TECHNIQUE

Before myself assessing the results, and in order to enable others 123
to assess and evaluate the material here presented, it is important that field method should be discussed. The particular technique I employed was born of the particular situation. I do not claim that any other technique was impossible, but I do claim that for the re-

discussion. The discussion is not entirely haphazard, but once again 621
the structural factor is elusive.

When first we look at the religious life of the Mbuti we feel the 771
pulse beating clearly. The *elima* and the *molimo* are outstandingly 796
evident as institutions connected with crisis, but the moment we try [881]
to analyze their function the beat becomes less distinct. Here the [765] •
picture is again confused by the fact that the villagers have similar [177]*
names for ceremonies of their own that are alike enough to lead to the assumption that the Mbuti adopted these institutions into their own disorganized framework. Then the pulse stops altogether.

I suggested earlier (Turnbull, 1956) that part of the answer lay in 121
a vital opposition between the two worlds of the Mbuti, the forest and 177*
the village. Recognizing that opposition is no less a relationship than 621
any other form of relationship, we can at least theoretically separate the two worlds temporarily, if they are truly in opposition, and study them apart. Using this device we are free to look at the Mbuti in the village context almost as though this were their sole existence, and discern there what system we can. We are also free to examine the same people in the forest context, living in small nomadic hunting bands, virtually independent of the village world. But by looking at the village world first, when we turn to the forest world we shall be able to follow the Mbuti not only as they move from one hunting camp to another, but also when they abandon the forest for a brief spell in the village, seized by a whim, by the desire for relaxation, or by their taste for village foods, wine and tobacco. In this way we shall arrive at a better understanding of both worlds of the Mbuti, and of the actual relationship between them. We shall also, in the process, test our hypothesis of opposition, and, if it be proven, discover the elusive principle that binds together the otherwise apparently lawless, leaderless, un-kin-conscious forest society.

[P.30 is blank]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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oughly as possible, it seems that among both Bira and Ndaka, and I 765
believe also among the Lesé, death is believed to put fellow clansmen [192]
of the deceased in great danger from the *keti*, or evil spirits. The object [776]
of the *molimo* is twofold, then; it must help the deceased on his
way, giving him what protection it can, and it must protect the living,
who will be in a state of ritual danger throughout the period of
mourning.

During that period the *molimo* meets regularly, at nighttime, in
the house of the senior surviving member of the clan, in whose possession C
the *tete* is held. Only adult male clansmen are admitted, and [533]
the sound of the *tete* is the audible evidence of the invisible presence C
of their totemic guardian spirit. Specially prepared food is offered to [782]
the spirit, and the rest is eaten by the men. No women are allowed C
to participate in any way, even by cooking the food, according to all 765
informants. However, I had been told the same thing about the 252
Mbuti and found it to be different, and do not accept this information 562
without some reservation. It would seem, though, that women generally
are excluded from the *molimo* of the villagers, and indeed it
really is no concern of theirs.

During the proceedings, which may last an hour or so, the men C
wail and call out the name and/or the kinship term of address of the 765
deceased; his praises are recited and he is commended to the ancestral [769]
spirits. At the same time, the praises of the surviving clan members
are similarly recited, and mention is made of the way in which they
have upheld tribal lore and observed all the rules of clan exogamy,
and have increased the number of attendant Mbuti. Continued protection
for the living is requested, particularly for the period of C
mourning. Apparently no Mbuti take part in this part of the ceremony, [563].
though there seemed to be some disagreement over this and P
my impression was that the associated Mbuti are not prohibited from [177]*
attending, but effectively seldom, if ever, do.

Upon the death of an Mbuti the *kpara* will not only oversee the C 764
burial and funerary ceremonies and divination, he will also want to 765
hear announced the calling together of the men of the *molimo*. Sometimes 563
he will leave it at that, but if the Mbuti continue to stay in the 571
village and hold any *molimo* meetings in their village camp, the P 764
kpara may attend one or two meetings. It is very noticeable that when 765 ●
he does, the meeting runs a completely different course, centering 177*
around some erotic dancing by the younger men and a small amount 571 [535]
of singing. The *molimo* trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of [533]

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The molimo trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of the villager *tete*, may be heard growling in a noncommittal manner, as if uncertain which clan totem to imitate from the diversity of clans undoubtedly represented at the Mbuti *molimo* fire. It seems that the most common sound for the instrument to make under such circumstances is the growl of a leopard, which safely covers all clans, Mbuti and villager.

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However, the villagers are not made welcome, and if it were any but the *kpara* or his representative the *molimo* would be abandoned the moment a villager approached. As it is, on the few occasions when I have seen a *kpara* attend, he was not offered any food or any other inducement to stay, the *molimo* trumpet remained out of sight the whole time and only growled indistinctly once or twice; the singing was sporadic and only the young men were active, dancing around the fire.

The Mbuti said that the villagers were afraid and would not in any case be likely to come near; the *kpara* only did it because he felt obliged to. In all cases of which I have any experience, except two instances where a brief *molimo* was held in a village camp for an Mbuti child who died there, the Mbuti *molimo* is held at nighttime in the forest, where interference from the village would be unthinkable. As with the *elima*, however, the closing stages are often held in the village, this being meant to coincide with the end of the official period of mourning and therefore the signal for a feast to be supplied by the villagers.

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It does seem significant, nonetheless, that the Mbuti should sing any *molimo* songs in the village camp, for normally they refuse to sing any of their true forest songs when in the village. However, they are sung infrequently, with marked restraint, and widely separated by long snatches of songs that I never heard in the forest or, unfortunately, in the villages. The latter bore a distinct resemblance to certain songs taught during the *nkumbi*, and some were undoubtedly variants on *nkumbi* songs. The only information I could get was they were not "songs of the forest" but were "songs of the village.". The villagers confirmed that they heard the Mbuti sometimes singing village *molimo* songs, and surprise was expressed that they would sing anything else, for everything else was *bulé*, empty.

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The connection between the *molimo*, as performed by the Mbuti in the village, and the *nkumbi* was made all the more evident when on one *molimo* occasion the two members of the *kpara's* family stood up and performed a dance only seen otherwise in the initiation camp.

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On another occasion the *kpara* himself did exactly the same thing. In C 765
the first instance the *kpara* was Ndaka, in the second, Bira. The 881
villagers evidently believe that whatever *molimo* ritual the Mbuti have, 563 535
it was learned from the village, if badly learned and performed with P
illegitimate variations. As with the *elima*, perhaps also for fear of 765 •
exposure to the malevolent forest spirits, the villagers do not seek to 881 535
interfere too much with Mbuti *molimo* celebrations. We shall see 177*
that these celebrations are quite divorced from the village *molimo*,
regardless of whether or not the origin of the two was common. Also,
we shall see that the Mbuti *molimo* has none of the connections that
evidently exist between the village *molimo* and the *nkumbi*.

As with the *elima*, the villagers limit the extent of their interest C 765
to ensuring the removal, by village-supplied procedure, of the last 783 P
taints of uncleanliness. This they do, again in conjunction with a 765
feast, turning a blind eye to the fact that as many as a dozen different 614
Mbuti "clans" may be represented at what is supposed to be a closed
clan feast.

The extent to which the villagers believe they assert supernatural C 563
control over the Mbuti does not coincide at all with the extent to 829
which they effectively do exert such control, for the reason that must 121
now be sufficiently obvious; no matter how many or what manner 648
of village institutions the Mbuti adopt, they are adopted into a P
preexisting system and no longer have the same interrelationships they 177*
do in the village system. The two systems are kept irreconcilably apart 648
by what has in effect been emerging throughout—the existence of 121
two completely different sets of values.

Yet the villagers are not entirely victims of their own *mbafu*, as
the Mbuti would have it. There is little else they could do, and the
adoption of the Mbuti into one aspect of village social structure
would indeed be *bulé* without their adoption into the total structure.
The villagers are consistent and logical, and above all it must be C
remembered that in their own eyes they have achieved what they set [626]
out to achieve—control. They believe that ultimate control is theirs [776]
because of the force of the supernatural powers on their side, and in
point of fact, although it does not work quite the way they think,
the concept of supernatural power does give them a small measure
of control to the extent that it creates fear.

But what is also achieved is the creation of a myth that completely regularizes the whole situation, as far as the villagers are concerned, affording them an institutionalized means of dealing with every possi-

361 When the camp is first set up, the framework of the huts is completed,
342 but they are probably only partly roofed. The greater the
621 distance between camps, the later the band arrives and the less opportunity
there is to complete the building that day. Sometimes
shelter is sought overnight at an old camp site on the way. But however
advanced the work may be on the first day, subtle changes take
place for the next two days, during which time lagging members of
the band will have arrived.

342 The first to reach the site choose any location they wish for their
621 family hut, the choice being left almost entirely to the women. Men,
476 women and children co-operate in the necessary work of clearing and
462 of cutting and collecting the saplings and phrynium roofing leaves
(*mongongo*). Women build the huts, sharing the supply of saplings
and leaves as necessary, and helping each other with the building if
darkness is approaching or if rain threatens. Such help seems to follow
[672] lines of friendship rather than of kinship, as does the grouping
[614] of the huts themselves.

[613]
361 For instance, the tight cluster at the north end of the camp (Plans
621 5 and 7) was brought about because of the death of Balekimito, an
613 old and respected lady who was a member of the Puemi/leopard lineage,
765 but married into the Bomasua/buffalo lineage. Both lineages
were jointly holding the *molimo* festival for the dead lady, and the
kumamolimo (*molimo* hearth) was placed in the center of their
rather exclusive cluster. The presence of two male and two female
members of another lineage, the Bokelé/buffalo, should be noted,
however, as an instance of the strength of affinal ties (the same thing
being evident at the southern end of the camp).

361 However, the Puemi and the Bokelé were the only ones in that
621 part of the camp to arrive on the first day. They built their huts facing
593 equally toward each other and toward the *kumamolimo*. When
595 Ekianga, member of the Bomasua and son of the dead lady, arrived
613 the next day with two of his three wives, there was an immediate
change in all the huts. When Amabosu (β) saw Ekianga (B) occupy
the hut built by his youngest wife, Amabosu's sister, he took
action. His own wife, who was Ekianga's sister, built an extension to
the house facing it almost directly away from her brother, looking
right into the entrance to the hut of Ausu (α), her husband's kinsman.
The reason was that Amabosu felt Ekianga should not be sleeping
with his youngest wife at that time, and wanted to show his
displeasure. Ausu, not wanting to take sides, carefully projected the

bers of each age level may be *apua'i* to each other doubly underlines 561 the importance of this age grouping as a structural principle of their 601 society, because it not only effectively allies members of the same age group, but it cuts across any unilineal descent pattern. Even though, if pressed, any one *apua'i* can and will trace his relationship to almost any other, through either cognatic or affinal lines, among themselves this is never done. The functions of the age group, also, have little to do with kinship.

The age group forms the next unit above the nuclear family, each 561 having its own functions and its own sphere of authority. Above the 621 age group one might consider the band to be divided into alliances 857 of age groups, though their function would be less easy to define. 883 However, such alliances do take place, generally in major disputes, where youths and children might ally against hunters and elders. Char- [192] acteristically, disputes concerning premarital sexual activity, betrothal [578] and *bopi* (playground) activity are the major occasions for such alliances. But the same element may be seen at work during the reli- [765] • gious *molimo* festival, where the group of adult men that sing around a fire at night may divide the hearth into two or three fires. The unmarried youths nearly always have one fire for themselves around which they dance their erotic dances; the hunters (the younger married men) may have a fire of their own, or they may join the *mangesé*, the elders, men who are no longer as active in the hunt as they used to be.

Young married couples are held responsible for reproduction, but 621 594 only to a limited extent for the rearing and education of their chil- [561] dren, for beyond the age of three or four a child becomes the responsi- [855] bility of the band as a whole. As an economic unit the family is divided into the appropriate age groups as a co-operative part of the total band. Effectively much of its economic activity is directly for its own individual benefit, but there is nearly always some sharing even when there is no necessity for sharing, to emphasize the communal rights to forest produce. As a political unit the family only has internal jurisdiction of the most minimal kind. The punishment of a wife or a child, or the complaint of a child about its parents, quickly becomes a matter for communal discussion. As a religious unit the family is of little significance indeed. But every nuclear family is expected to participate in religious festivals, as symbolized when the *molimo* hearth is made up by taking embers from every family hearth, and when a camp is moved each family carefully takes an ember from

594 its own hearth to kindle its own fire in the new camp. The responsibility
621 of members of a nuclear family in times of crisis, such as birth,
puberty, marriage and death, does not differ much from the responsibility of the band as a whole, the difference being one of degree or intensity.

561 The age group functions as a major institution of education, instructing
86 the group junior to it in its ways, preparing it for advance
to the next, their own, level. Thus the care and education of children rests largely with youths and the oldest of the elders. Youths and hunters depend on each other in the joint hunting and gathering activities, the youths learning from their mothers and fathers all they will soon need to know as hunters themselves. Hunters gradually associate more and more with the *mangesé* (literally, "the great ones") around the evening fires, to listen to the talk of the elders and, in time, to participate.

561 As an economic unit the age group is of supreme importance. Children
857 scavenge and help supply their own needs through fishing, trapping,
883 snaring and any other forms of collecting or hunting within
[476] their means. In this they may at times be helped by the youths. The
youths are of vital importance to the hunt, the girls acting as beaters with their mothers, and also collecting, while the boys stand guard at the extremities of the circle of nets, having assisted in setting up the nets. Youths may also be expected to perform a number of chores such as fetching wood and water into the camp. The hunters are the prime unit responsible for the sustenance of the band; the *mangesé* are absolved from such responsibilities and may expect to be fed, housed and clothed by the younger age groups.

561 Politically each age group has informal jurisdiction over its members,
626 utilizing ridicule and ostracism, sometimes driving a member
627 to seek acceptance in the lower age level, or justification by the upper.
For a lower age level to ridicule or ostracize a member of a higher
level is a supreme condemnation and a most powerful sanction. Further,
• [765] it will be seen that part of the *molimo* festival is a morning
tour of the camp by the youths, carrying the *molimo* trumpet and disguised by leaves and branches, at which time they single out the hut of any troublemaker, however young or old, and threaten to tear it to pieces. Even if there is no such troublemaker, the youths will go from hut to hut stripping a few leaves off the roof of each, causing other minor damage, simply representing the accepted principle of authority, of law and order.

Youths also have considerable say in the settling of any dispute 561
concerning betrothal, though ultimately it is the *mangesé* who decide 627
such matters. The hunters control all activities concerning the hunt
and the movement of camp. The *mangesé* act as general arbiters and [788]
are effectively a court of final appeal, their age entitling them to unquestioning
respect. Particularly in matters concerning betrothal 561
are the *mangesé* consulted, for their genealogical memory can be [582]
stretched to suit the occasion. And in the *molimo* festival, as in the [765]
elima, they share the honors with the youths: the hunters have to do
most of the work, supplying the food and cooking it for the nightly
or daily feasting, but the singing and dancing, which are central to
the festivals, are led by the *mangesé* and the youths.

In matters concerning relationship with other bands, the band as 621
a whole, rather than any age group or association of age groups, de- 628
cides the issue. On such occasions even children will sit by and take 561
part.

We have already mentioned some of the religious functions of the 621
age groups, in association with their political functions, and it will 561
be seen that the two are closely interconnected. It might just be 765
pointed out here that in a *molimo* festival held for the death of an
Mbuti, age-group and band membership take precedence over family
membership. The youths will lead the dancing, and the leading youth [535]
will lead because he is the best dancer, not because he is related to
the dead person. Similarly with the singing led by the *mangesé*. The [533]
molimo horn may be supplied by anyone. The person who sings into
it is generally a youth, though sometimes a young hunter, again regardless
of kinship but on account of his renown and ability as a
singer.

Considering the very clear roles of the age groups, and their com- 621
prehensive nature, it is plain that any unilineal system of descent 611
would be highly disruptive. The loose laws of marriage and adoption, 561
which are permissive rather than prescriptive, preferential or prohibitive,
and the nonlineal nature of band composition allow for the
flexibility that is obviously necessary to maintain the proper balance
of recruitment into each age group.

Although a bilateral recognition of descent does exist and is some- 621
times utilized to provide the necessary balance of power, it can still 611
hardly be dignified by the term "lineage system." Owing to the non- [594]
lineal, territorial nature of band composition, and the frequency of
sister exchange, nuclear families may divide or remain united, regardless
of lineage, depending upon the context.

888 hunter may initiate the action. Thus the *elima* and the *molimo*, which
627 are crisis festivals, are initiated by the hunters, but it is the elders who
578 control them and give them their spiritual quality. It is the elders who
[881] act not only as arbiters between the members of the band, but be-
[765] tween the band and the forest, between this life and the next. Even
in the most ordinary run of everyday life there is seldom a day that
does not demand from one elder or another, man or woman, some
opinion that will be couched in terms like "such and such is good for
(or pleasing to) the forest," or "this makes my spirit (*roho*) feel
good."

621 The greatest departures from daily life occur when the band visits
*177 the village, or when a villager visits the band. In either case it is as
512 though the whole social structure of the Mbuti were suddenly
changed. A single individual becomes, all at once, a chief. Age groups
break up and nuclear families come to the fore. The only central fire
will be that of the "chief." But as this is not part of the forest world,
exceptions occur within the forest context only rarely. There is sel-
621 dom any disaster such as the invasion of a camp by elephant, though
931 it happens sometimes. Hunting is generally more than adequate
512 throughout the year. But though hunger does sometimes come to the
Mbuti, starvation is unknown. Sickness is not uncommon, but is
rarely serious. Throughout the year daily life goes its usual way in-
terrupted only by major, inevitable crises of the life cycle.

844 BIRTH

Birth is the first crisis of life, and among the Mbuti it is, as else-
[165] where, not without its attendant dangers. Though no statistics are
available, it is the opinion of villagers and Mbuti, and of many Eu-
ropeans, doctors and otherwise, who know both communities, that
infant mortality is appreciably less among the Mbuti, and sterility
[164] less common. This may be due to the fact that their relative isolation
has defended the Mbuti against the venereal diseases widespread
among the villagers. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the
Mbuti evidently feel less need for concern at childbirth. This applies
844 to both the nuclear family and to the band. There is absolutely no
621 formal recognition on the part of the band, and only the barest of
interest. Considering the fluid and nonlineal composition of the band
this is not surprising, particularly since, for this type of band, birth
is only one form of recruitment, and by no means the most sure or

766 [768] two or three yards of the hut, which in that case continues to be occupied. The main difference between the death of a child and that of an adult is that the death of an adult is likely to be made into an occasion for a *molimo* festival; a child's death is seldom marked in this way, and if at all then only briefly.

761 -765 621 Because the *molimo* has more to do with life than death it is dealt with separately in the section on religious life of the Mbuti. Here it should simply be noted that it coincides with the efforts of the elders to restore normality as quickly as possible. While personal grief is recognized and allowed, it is still resented and every effort is made to minimize it by those not so directly concerned. The majority of the band make every attempt to maintain a normal daily routine, and to ignore the death as far as possible. The *molimo* itself calls for vigorous hunting during the daytime, and equally vigorous singing and dancing at night. It involves the entire band except the children and through its very emphasis on life it reinforces band solidarity. Through the sheer pleasure found in *molimo* activities personal grief is lessened, and through the symbolic nature of some of the songs and dances the despair that death could otherwise awaken is averted. Death is acknowledged, in the *molimo* fire dance, as inevitable and as being unconnected with any unnatural force. The *molimo* songs stress that if death occurs it must occur at the will of the forest, and since the forest is good then death must be good. The *molimo*, however, goes [778] beyond a mere acceptance of death, and many of the songs and dances are sheer expressions of joy in life, and the stated objective of the *molimo* is to make the forest happy, "to rejoice the forest."

76 621 594 Thus death affects the nuclear family through the personal nature of the loss, and it is the duty of the nuclear family, in the forest context, to dispose of the dead. They are prevented by the rest of the band from giving way to any prolonged exhibition of grief, and in any case by the time death takes place much of their grief has been spent in the last moments of sickness. The family may be aided by others in the burial, though help is not generally needed. But from that moment on, the band takes charge of the situation and concentrates on restoring the normality of life. The extent to which the *molimo* is a band affair rather than the affair of the nuclear family concerned will be seen later. It will also be seen, then, how death is made into an occasion for reaffirming the bonds of age groups, and for establishing their distinct responsibilities.

761 765 If life begins, for the Mbuti, with little fanfare, it ends with one

of the most dramatic festivals possible. The *molimo* is not concerned 761
with the death of the individual, nor with securing safe passage for 765 •
the soul, but rather with affirming a belief in life and in the continu- [182]
ity of life and in the continuity of the band, despite the fact of death. [621]

It seems, from inquiry in all parts of the forest, that there were 764
many different ways of burying the dead and that no uniform custom 768
existed; rather that, as now, each band had its own preferences. The 184
most common method now, and apparently in the past, is simply to pull the hut down over the corpse, the body having been buried in a shallow pit dug in the ground or simply left on the bed, covered with leaves. In some bands the hut is then burned, in others it is left, but the general practice is to move camp at once. If it is too late to move that day, the family concerned will sleep out in the open until they are able to build a new hut in the next camp.

On some occasions bodies are buried up in trees, and in the south- 764
eastern region of net-hunters this is how the Mbuti say they dispose 171*
of dead lepers. Nearly all Mbuti say that in the old days they buried [184]
their dead in holes in the ground, filling the holes in afterward so [766]
that the animals would not find the bodies. Today it is usual, throughout the forest, to wash the body before disposing of it in any of these ways. But this, and other practices such as scenting the corpse, wrapping it in a cloth if one is available, raising and lowering it three times before burial, and orienting the body in its resting place, vary according to the practices of the local villagers, and are almost certainly to a large extent borrowed from them. The Mbuti seem impatient and unconcerned about such details, and if they attend to them they do so only perfunctorily. They are particularly reluctant to allow anything of any possible value to be buried with a body, and if the burial takes place in a village and the villagers insist on using cloths and sleeping mats, the Mbuti will do their best to retrieve these unseen, at the last moment.

Similarly, head-shaving seems to be of little significance to the 765
Mbuti, though they frequently do shave when a member of the band 302
dies. But, unlike the villagers, they are not consistent in the practice, and they leave their hair lying around where it has fallen to the ground, whereas the villagers are scrupulously careful to collect their own hair cuttings, which they take off into the forest, or to a stream, and secretly hide.

The explanation given for self-mortification is that all the imme- 765
diate family feel responsible, to some extent, for a death in their 152
midst. [761]

765 midst. Family members also openly comment on all the things they 152 should have done for the dead person but did not do. At times when one individual is particularly repentant, such as one old lady I saw who tied a noose around her neck, others will assist her. In this case the old lady was attacked by her own family, some of whom jumped on top of her, beating her to the ground, others grabbing the rope and tugging it, tightening the noose around her neck. There was never any question, however, that this was anything but a histrionic display. On a different occasion, when another old lady started stabbing herself with a knife, the band looked on unconcernedly because even when the blood was flowing freely they knew she would come to no harm; she was merely scratching the skin.

761 By contrast there is no actual attempt to lay the blame for death 765 at any individual's door. The occasion may be made one for blaming people for not having behaved as they should have behaved, but death itself is accepted by the Mbuti as being perfectly natural. It does not [783] seem to be thought of as unclean or contaminating, and there is no purification ritual, or any ritual to speed the soul of the departed on its way. On one occasion a procession of Mbuti returning from the burial of one of their band proceeded directly to the wedding of another [594] member. The nuclear family concerned is under no restrictions, only under heavy pressure to forget the death as soon as possible. In wailing, instead of using the dead person's name the mourners will refer to him as "You who died in the morning," referring to whatever time the death took place. Those in the band not immediately related will not refer to the dead person even in this indirect way.

765 In various parts of the forest there are tales of a custom whereby 462 female relatives of a dead man used to close the trails leading to the camp and guard them, wailing and singing. Anyone wishing to pass had to pay by leaving an arrow in a piece of soft wood left there for the purpose. Among the Budo, in the north, this is known as *unai*, and the net-hunters in that region call it *butuma*. They say that while the girls are wailing and singing the men are silent. After a week the girls stop and the men take over and sing joyful songs. The women's job is "to remember," they say, the men's "to forget." The Budo and Mbuti insist this is an old Mbuti custom. (Among the Epulu Mbuti it is certainly true that most of the wailing is done by women, but it is not formalized in this way.)

[152] [171] Among the Lesé the same custom is known as *ofa*. They say their women wailed for two or three months, and during this time the men

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became bitter and went far away until they had killed and eaten someone. 462
Their bitterness then left them and they returned and the *ofa* 152
ended. The Mbuti archers in this region deny they do this, but agree [771]
that it is a woman's job to wail. A man's job is to hunt. A man will say, "We are glad you are dead, now you can guide us to good hunting." (The Epulu net-hunters claim to say the same thing when the *molimo* is over.) Some Lesé refer to the same custom as *chachima*.

Over to the east, I found that the Plains Bira have a similar custom 765
called *masoso*. Among the Forest Bira it seems to be a part of what 462
they call their *molimo*. Again the women of the family are expected 771
to wail formally and to exact tribute from visitors coming to the village of the deceased. The men argue about problems of inheritance, and conduct the burial and purification rituals.

Among all the villagers it is stressed that any such death ritual concerns 765
only the family of the deceased. Whatever other similarities 764
there may be between their practices and those of the Mbuti in this 621
connection, a restriction on participation along kinship lines is not 594
one of them. For the Mbuti a death is mourned and grieved by any
who have reason for feeling a personal loss. This means primarily the [561]
immediate family and age mates. These are the people responsible for the disposal of the body, though others will help if help is needed. The band as a whole reacts to the loss however, and it is the responsibility of the band as a whole to celebrate the death in such a way as to restore the normality of life. This is the *molimo*.[3]

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[3] The wider structural significance of the *molimo* is discussed in the last two chapters, "Principles of Organization."

no further, except to point again to the obvious potential relationship 439
between hunting technology and village exchange, the net-hunters 224
being more easily able to acquire an excess of meat than the archers. 433
However, it is difficult to ascertain just how far this relationship is 184
effectual, for even the net-hunters maintain minimal exchange with
the villagers, and only on the same nonformalized individual basis.
There is rather more likelihood among the archers for there to exist a [622]
capita or *sultani* who will convey to his fellow-Mbuti the wishes of [621]
the villagers although he has no authority to take any other action,
and this may be seen as being due, in part at least, to the less productive
technology of the archers, and in part to the greater prevalence
of fragmentation into small sub-bands.

DIVISION OF LABOR

There is little to say about the division of labor in Mbuti society, 462
but most important is the fact that there is no religious belief or ritual 222
practice that relates any activity to any one sex, nor is there any consecration 224
of those everyday tasks that normally fall into the jurisdiction
of one sex or the other. This, of course, is what might be expected
from the personal terminology, which differentiates the sexes clearly
only at the parental level. Basically men hunt and make hunting [765]
equipment, and organize the *molimo* festivals. The women gather [881]
vegetable foods and other forest produce, build the huts, prepare and
cook the food; they organize the *elima* festival. Men make bark cloth,
women make baskets. Children take part in all the economic activities.
But women help make the nets, and they invariably make the
twine from which the nets are made. Among the net-hunters the
women, girls and young children act as beaters and are thus an integral
part of the hunt, as they are among the archers in the archer *begbe*
hunt. Men of both archer and net-hunter bands have no hesitation
in gathering mushrooms and other vegetable foods when they have
the opportunity. In both groups it is primarily and almost exclusively
the men who gather the honey, for women seldom climb trees.

Women take part in the *molimo* and, although it is a small part, it 562
is a highly significant one. The *elima*, though organized by the women [765]
and stemming from the maturation of a girl, is of equal importance to [881]
the male youths who play a vital role in the festival. All in all, sex does [433]
not seem to be of any particular significance in determining the structure
of Mbuti economic activity. Of far greater significance is age, 561 433

it, the children standing guard at the net or at the fringes of the hunt), 224
nonetheless the nuclear family is divided in the hunt, and both men 621
and women are forced to co-operate with their neighbors, who may 626
or may not be kin. The hunt above all is not an individual affair but 594
involves the band as a whole, as is borne out in the ultimate disposition of the spoils.

That the net-hunt is regarded as a matter of importance to the for- 224
est, regarding the forest in a religious sense, is evidenced by the hunt- 778
ing fire, the song and the dance, rather than by any elaborate ritual, purification, or sexual taboo. The close relationship between the
hunt as an economic activity and the hunt as a religious act is seen in [304]
the widespread custom of rubbing ashes from charred forest woods into the skin, sometimes slitting the skin first to achieve permanent tattoo marks. This is stated to secure the protection of the forest.

Whereas I was never able to secure confirmation of Schebesta's de- 224
scription of food offerings being made to the forest, except through 825
villager informants, there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated 152
urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is [114]
necessary for the band's needs for the day. This in fact may be one [782]
reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers. There is no expression of joy in the capturing and killing of an animal, though the excitement still runs strongly. The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absent-mindedly do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.

The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a 224
gift of the forest, and a gift that may be withheld if abused by waste.
It is further considered that good hunting is essential to the success [881]
of either an *elima* or a *molimo* festival, and during such festivals cer- [765]
tain hunts are devoted expressly to supplying the festival with food.

Among the archers, the system of sharing game and the respect for 224
game are comparable in their political and religious connotations: 621

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222 of the word was ever given to me; it simply refers to an elbow, a
562 chicken or a fallen tree, according to pronunciation. It is pronounced
535 all ways, and all forms of translation are given, stories being invented
831 ad lib to explain the dance.

As people come out of their huts or leave their hearths to join in the line, the movements get more and more suggestive and rhythmic, and when the line is complete couples will break away and dance into the center and there imitate the act of copulation according to their reversed roles, while the others dance around, singing and laughing loudly. Each couple tries to outdo the others in exaggeration and suggestiveness, and just about every conceivable abnormal situation is imitated, dogs, chickens, children, even infants being dragged into the act if they are within reach.

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[522] The end of the dance is the usual near-hysterical laughter that is brought on by any form of exaggerated mime or storytelling, with the dancers rolling on the ground and clapping their hands to show their amusement. As soon as this has subsided the dance is likely to start all over again for a second or even a third time.

Ekokomea, however, is by no means danced every day, even during
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the honey season; more than once or twice a week would be rather
• [765] frequent. It is similar during the *molimo*. So throughout the year the
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dance is not likely to take place in any one band more than a dozen
[535] times. This is one dance that I have seen danced both in the forest and
[186] in the village. It is never danced by the villagers, who regard it as a sign of Mbuti depravity, but who nonetheless watch it with the greatest pleasure. The older Mbuti say it would not be danced in the village, but even to them either its exact significance is not clear or else it is something they were unwilling to discuss.

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221 Much more directly connected with the honey season is a mimetic
222 dance in which the men enact the honey gatherers, the women the
535 bees. The men form a line and dance around the camp as though going through the forest looking and listening for bees. Parallel to them, and sometimes on the verge of the camp or even in the forest, is a line of women. The men sing a honey song, the women buzz like bees. When the men pretend they find the honey and are about to take it, the women descend on them and beat the burning embers they carry above the men's heads so that the sparks fall on them—stinging them like bees, they say. This is often followed by a good-natured fight which may develop either into the tug-of-war or *ekokomea*.

000 Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which

Closer to an indigenous system of pun-
627 ishment is the morning rampage of the youths' section of the *molimo*
• [765] society. Disguised behind leafy branches they charge through the camp with the *molimo* trumpet on their shoulders, and attack the huts of any truly recalcitrant offenders. Even then, as a token of the responsibility of the entire camp, the youths attack *every* hut to some extent, taking a token leaf from every hut. And still in keeping with the notion of dissipating the blame, they are likely to give the worst beating to the hut of the disputant who is least to blame.

681 There are two threats that form the ultimate sanctions against
684 the most serious offenses. One is the threat of ostracism, for such crimes as incest, and this is spoken of as leaving the matter to the forest. Ostracism means refusing membership in the band. If one band does this, other bands are likely to follow suit, and the offender
688 will be left alone in the forest, and alone he will die. The other threat
765 is the direct threat of death, but this is reserved among the Epulu
553 Mbuti and other net-hunting bands uniquely for the crime of failure on the part of an adult male to sing (a crime sometimes conversely described as sleeping) during the *molimo* festival. The sacred singing takes place late at night, and its efficacy depends on participation of all the men and youths. It is said that anyone found sleeping (the only conceivable reason for not singing) would be killed with two spears in the stomach and buried beneath the *molimo* hearth. The women would simply be told he had gone away, or been taken by a leopard, and he would never be referred to again.

627 The different ways of dealing with a dispute depend so much upon
578 the context rather than upon the precise nature of the dispute that the legal process can best be illustrated by citing a number of cases. It will immediately be apparent that in the vast majority of instances there was no visible conclusion to the disputes at all; they evaporated as quickly as they arose. There were few instances where anything resembling a general opinion was expressed, and even fewer where any positive action was taken. The cases that follow, then, are classified according to the most common causes of dispute. Of such causes food and sex are by far the most common. Territorial disputes are confined to married couples with different territorial affiliations, but whereas food disputes are also largely found among the young (married) hunters, they are by no means always marital, but often between unrelated hunters or their wives, and occasionally among youths. Disputes concerning sex involve both the young married couples and youths, as do the everyday disputes over apparently

626 578 Cephu was neither a very good nor a very popular hunter, and it may
224 be that he was afforded less cooperation by his fellow hunters as a
626 result. Toward the end of a particularly unsuccessful day, Cephu
627 slipped off and set his net up where it would catch the first wave of
224 animals put up by the beat. He was caught with his spoils, however,
578 and when back in camp there was a gathering of all the youths and hunters and elders (except Moké) at the *kumamolimo* (hearth of the *molimo*), to which Cephu was summoned by calling his name across to the small camp he had built for himself. He was named in the most uncomplimentary terms, and when he finally came to defend himself he was subjected to indignities, even by the youths and children. He was openly accused of stealing food from his fellow Mbuti, and this was something only animals did (note that the anger was of the band at someone having stolen from the band; this to the Mbuti is true theft). All manner of other grievances were brought up
• [165] against Cephu, particularly his lack of participation in the *molimo* for Balekimito, Ekianga's mother, paternal aunt to Manyalibo and Masisi. Cephu responded that Balekimito was not his mother, and this was the trap into which he had been led. By saying this he disclaimed membership of the hearth, and so his theft became more logical but his act even more reprehensible. Finding himself now both a thief and an outsider, Cephu broke down and offered to return all the meat he had caught. The hunters went with him and stripped not only his hut but those of the three other families in Cephu's camp, leaving Cephu complaining that he would die.

That evening, however, Masisi slipped over in the dark with a peace offering of cooked food[4] and not long afterward Cephu made his way to the *kumamolimo* and joined in the singing for his "mother," Balekimito. This was one of the very rare occasions when a dispute was ended by what might be considered as direct retributive and punitive action by the band.

685 10. This is not to say that theft of food never takes place. It would
157 be a rare Mbuti woman who did not conceal a portion of the catch
[224] in case she was forced to share with others, and occasionally a bachelor like Pepei, with a reputation for being somewhat *wazi-wazi*, was caught stealing a small quantity of food from a cooking pot or from

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[4] Prestation is an important though unformalized part of Mbuti life, and a major
[431] means of establishing social relationships. Any property except the most personal items,
[182] such as used bark cloth, bows and spears, are likely to change hands, and even these personal items may be offered or sought.

sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not 626
definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the 683
individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways
without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domes- 593
tic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is 578
late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some 152
precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, 593
Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was 578
suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao 152
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said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was [837]
going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty.
He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), 765
had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone 593
made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[7] She 578
told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it [787]
carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying [534]

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[7] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself. [177]*

• 765 the food for the festivities, but nobody was helping him. At this
593 point, instead of naming his wife, he named another sister, living in
578 the same camp, and said that she had not done her part. He added, as an afterthought, that his own wife was equally responsible, and stepped down.

765 Moké took his place and began a long harangue, telling the camp
626 that the *molimo* was nothing to play with, that it was big and it was
593 dangerous, and it could kill you. He pointed out that there had been no singing for two days and two nights, because of rain, and that indeed the *molimo* had become empty. The men should have built a hut for the *molimo*. But even so it was bad for Baumbao to take down the baskets. These should have been kept full; an empty *molimo* basket is bad for the forest. Moké then turned to Baumbao and said, "Your wife is one of us, she belongs to this hearth; it is for you to see that she keeps the basket full." Baumbao then stalked off in a temper, and Eyalo, his sister's husband, said that Baumbao never dreamed of anything but his wife's bad cooking and the whole *molimo* was empty and he was not going to contribute to an empty *molimo*, nor was his wife.

Moké replied, "Empty or not empty, that is the *molimo* hearth and it has to be looked after as long as it is there." He left, and a number of youths began to restore the sticks that had held the baskets, and then carried the baskets around from hut to hut, collecting offerings from each one. That night there was some singing, and for the next few nights. Then the festival was brought to an end. It was noticeable, however, that Tabakali was constantly being helped by her youngest sister-in-law both in collecting food for the *molimo* basket, and in cooking it.

834 DISPUTES CONCERNING SEX

578 13. There is a great deal of latitude in any Mbuti band on the sexual behavior of its members, but there are certain things that are known to cause offense. One is the playing with the private parts of a woman in front of her kin or her husband. One morning the camp clown, Matungi, was playing in this manner with Kengé's half sister, married to Kokoyo and mother of two children. Kengé was nearby and took great offense, and said that if Matungi wanted to play with the girl elsewhere that was all right, but not in front of her brother. Matungi replied by becoming even more intimate, whereupon

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an
administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the 578
money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the 648
girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a
thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still 578
standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up 152
and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's
face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

30. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought [264]
forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had [53]
Moké not taken the *banja* sticks and started beating them, a sign [765]
for the *molimo* singing to begin. [533]

31. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was dancing [301]
vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed
the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying.
Nobody interfered.

32. Amabosu, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to [593]
move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to [372]
her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Amabosu,
fed by his mother, paid no attention.

33. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead 578
to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in 152
The Forest People (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and 593
Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy
day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi
was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to
smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-
stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight between [626]
the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of
ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action
of the *molimo* in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure
of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT 685

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except [177]*
in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was [183]
thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed
at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious
case that was never settled.

539 The elephants came. They began to kill all the bananas. They be-
186 gan to completely kill the plantation. The youths ran to the old man
825 and said, "Oh, Father, the elephants have come again and are killing
245 our plantation." [The old man said], "Good, I shall go and chat with
them. All of you stay here, completely quiet."

The old man went to the plantation. He cried and cried. He threw himself on the ground. The elephants looked at him and said, "What thing is this? The youths have not come to chase us away, only an old Mbuti and he just cries. It is good, we shall eat quietly."

They ate many bananas, and the youths remained completely quiet in the camp. The old man cried greatly, "Oh, my children, all are dead. Oh, my children, where are they?"

The elephants heard, and said to the old man, "Why are you crying like that? And where are the youths? We shall eat up all the plantation." The old man replied, "Eat, eat it all. My children are all dead." And he continued crying.

539 The elephants said, "But you have many children. How did they
186 die?" The old man said, "It was an evil spirit, very evil indeed. He
825 walked with two spears.[2] He was very fat, like you. Every day I sent
245 someone to cut bananas and the evil spirit ate him. Now he has eaten
776 all my children. He said it was his plantation and that he would kill
everyone who came here. Oh, my children have all died emptily. Why did the evil spirit not bother some other plantation, why did he curse mine?" He cried greatly and he left.

The elephants said, "Ha! If a spirit that bad has cursed this plantation, we should go somewhere else. Let us go quickly, before he kills us!"

Because elephants are like people of the village, and they are afraid of evil spirits. But they are afraid emptily. They went far. The old man called all his children and said, "Now the elephants will not come back. They think this is a place full of bad spirits. Thus we shall remain quiet. It is our plantation. Nobody else will bother us."

539
186 Although the scene is the plantation, thus asserting their claim to
829 the plantations of the villagers, the Mbuti plainly are really referring

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[765] [2] Evidently a feature that to the Mbuti conveys a real fear of or respect for the supernatural, for in the morning rampages of the *molimo*, in its role as judge and when seeking Mbuti who are committing the crime of sleeping during the singing, the hunter acting the part carries a spear under each arm. See also in the second legend cited, where a spirit wanders through the night with two firebrands, which is the way in which the entrance of the *molimo* trumpet into the camp is often marked.

539

to their forest sanctuary, and describing their tactics for keeping it 186
free of bothersome, elephant-like villagers. Hunting is not mentioned; 829
the two spears (and in the next legend the two firebrands) are 539
uniquely related to the *molimo*, which, as is seen in the next chapter, 186
offers major roles to the elders and the youths; precise age levels are 829
specified in this legend. Thus the defense of the forest is considered 765
as part of the role of the *molimo*. There is significantly no talk of a [789]
resort to magic or witchcraft or sorcery, and the mention of the evil [754]
spirits is accompanied by no belief in them. [776]

In the second legend, however, the first part is a very straight de- 539
scription of exactly how an Mbuti might cheat a villager simply by 439
concealing a portion of his honey, whereas the second part describes how the Mbuti is himself cheated. The second part alone could be taken as another way in which Mbuti explain to villagers why they have no meat or honey for them (see a third legend at the end of this chapter for such an example), but in this juxtaposition seems to indicate a certain belief that the Mbuti themselves might be cheated in this way.

LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY 539

I went to the forest to collect honey. I went, I went, I went. I went 222
very far, beyond the big river [an indication of trespass, perhaps, making it a situation displeasing to the forest; hence the ultimate defeat of the Mbuti?]. I heard the sound of bees. Way up high I saw the place of the honey. I said, "Ha! Nobody has enclosed this tree with a vine; it is my tree, it is my honey."

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed. I cut a vine, I fanned up my fire and put the fire [smoking embers] in my basket. I began to climb. I climbed, I climbed, I climbed. The honey was very high up, it was real honey, not *apuma* [a special fermented honey]. I reached it. I fastened the vine and I sat. I put the fire [in a leaf cone] into the hole and I blew. Much smoke came and the bees ran away. I chopped, I chopped, I chopped. While I was cutting I heard someone walking
below. "Ah! Who is walking below me? It is my master [*kpara*]. [571]
He heard me cutting [the adverse aspect of noise] and followed me."

I began to sing. I sang loudly. He called to me, but I pretended 539
that I did not hear him. I sang and I chopped. I sang, "Ah! I am chop- 222
ping out honey to give to my *kpara!*" And slowly I chopped out the 571 439
honey. I got a lot of it. But I only put part of it in my basket. The

PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without 192
which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or 761
think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and 778
breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, 82
then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

192
Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily 776
the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the
Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of [761]
the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally 776
slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings 828
of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one
would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you [772]
might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned
from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the 776
molimo trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role, 828
159

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[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The 534
dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a
rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice [535]
versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the [765]
Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

776 but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try.
828 He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine
159 534 choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was
not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However,
776 insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if
778 the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place
[224] then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong"
hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not some-
thing actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly
poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other
closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

778
BORU

761 A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as
826 for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh
[192] and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It
is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code
of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away
the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the depar-
ture of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus
physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a
sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence
that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may es-
cape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath,
it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means
of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as re-
778 quiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed
761 out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape
826 through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti
831 recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they
do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the
[535] variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not
only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual
apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major
[765] feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understand-
able, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the
Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so
graphically depicts.

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or
533 female, during the ensuing festival (*molimo*), but some of them may
765 be sung at other times of crisis that threaten life, notably sickness
or poor hunting. Certain songs seem to be reserved for actual death, but my impression is that this is a matter of personal attitude, for there are other ways in which a distinction is more clearly made between what are called the lesser and the greater *molimo*, the latter being the festival concerned solely with death.

533 To the same extent that the *elima* songs are of rather more impor-
462 tance to women than men, so are *molimo* songs considered more the
881 concern of men. There is, however, no absolute exclusion. On the
765 contrary, the male youths are an integral part of the *elima* festival,
which celebrates their puberty just as much as it celebrates that of the girls, and although the actual festival is occasioned by the physical maturation of the girls, who are then taught the *elima* songs, the male youths are needed to sing the chorus to certain of those songs. In the *molimo*, at one point, the roles of the sexes are reversed (as in *ekokomea*), with the women taking over the men's songs, the men sitting back and listening, like women.

533 An examination of Mbuti song form not only reveals areas of con-
182 cern to the Mbuti, such as their food-getting activities, life and death,
181 but it also reveals the concern of the Mbuti for cooperative activity.
Each type of song requires a group of people to sing it, and if there is a solo it is sung over a chorus, and the solo is passed around from one individual to another. This is similar to the Mbuti rejection of individual authority and their concern for dispersing leadership as widely as possible. There are certain parts of certain songs that are
[561] sung by youths, hunters or elders, strictly according to age, and song form thus also reinforces Mbuti concern for the age differential as an important element of their social structure. The songs are most frequently in round, or canon, form, and the hunting songs, in order to heighten the need for the closest possible cooperation (the same need that is demanded by the hunt itself), are sometimes sung in *hoquet*.[5]

533 There are certain similarities between the hunting songs and the *molimo* songs, but this is an area that requires a great deal more care-

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[5] This is a technique in which each note of the melodic line is taken by a single individual who sings that note alone, at the correct moment. The melodic line is thus literally divided among the participants (sometimes singing in groups of two or three), and the melody can only be reconstituted and heard by the cooperation of all. The complications are heightened by the use of canon, and by the use of a harmonic pattern which is also sung in *hoquet*, and proceeds clockwise as the melodic line proceeds, as always, counterclockwise.

ful analysis by competent musicologists.[6] As described, the above 533
divisions represent divisions recognized by the Mbuti, and visible in
differences of musical form. There is sometimes an additional cate- 533
gory stated, that of the elephant-hunting song, which seems to overlap 224
both the ordinary hunting song (specifically referred to by the Epulu
Mbuti as a net-hunting song) and the *molimo* song. In view of the [825]
possible elephant symbolism in the *molimo* festival, this could be of [765]
importance, though not enough is known at the moment of the elephant-hunting song to properly assess its position in the system. In this respect it should also be remembered that the Ngwana term *esumba*, or *lusumba*, frequently used by the Mbuti in the forest context as synonymous with their *molimo*, was originally for the Ngwana in the nature of elephant-hunting magic.

All songs share the same essential nature, sharing the same power 533
of sound. The sound "awakens" the forest, in Mbuti terminology, 822
and the nature of the song indicates the particular area of interest of 778
the Mbuti at that moment, thus attracting the forest's attention to the immediate needs of its children. It is also of the essential nature of all songs that they should be "pleasing to the forest."[7]

Rather more magical in nature, perhaps, is the way the Mbuti use 822
other forms of sound than song. A sudden noise of any kind is con- [201]
sidered "strong," and generally bad; an isolated hand or arm clap, or
a single loud shout, will bring complete silence to a camp or to a hunt. [198]
Whistling is considered very "strong" indeed, but here the word [192]

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[6] It is interesting to note here the elephant-hunting significance of the Ngwana *esumba* ritual, and the linguistic confusion between *esumba* and *molimo*. Frequently, I have seen in the forest the remains of what seems like the model of a spear-fall, and have always been told that a *molimo* had been held there. Most often such sites were in old, deserted camps, once or twice (particularly in archer territory) on the trail. [765]

[7] Pahlen (1949) gives an excellent general background to the primitive concept and use of music, though his acceptance of the sounds of nature as symbols of supernatural powers is not demonstrated. He points out (p. 18) how in ancient cultures music went hand in hand with religion, "the synthesis of wisdom, beauty, kindness and solace." He is referring primarily to countries with "highly developed cultures," but much of what he says is applicable to primitive society. It is certain that an acute analysis of Mbuti music would reveal much that parallels the structure of Mbuti society. The extraordinary level of polyphonic achievement is surely related to a highly developed individualism that would hardly tolerate the confines of unison. The Mbuti musical categories of *berai* and *imiai*, chorus and solo song, indicate a system of recognized relationships between the group and the individual, and the technique of *hoquet*, already mentioned, further mirrors social relationships. Such considerations, however, should not obscure Pahlen's major point that music also mirrors social values. It is an analytical tool, requiring little musical training, that has been much neglected by anthropologists, and it is hoped that a systematic analysis of Mbuti music now being undertaken at Columbia University will provide data from which not only may further light be shed on Mbuti society, but from which may emerge the beginnings of an ethno-musicological methodology.

822 "strong" has the same double meaning that it has when used to de-
[198] scribe song. In using either the Ngwana term (*nguvu*) or the Bira
[192] term (*mota*), the Mbuti may imply difficulty as well as sheer physical
strength. A sudden noise that is *mota* has an inherent power of its
own. A song or whistle has power only if it is properly performed.
822 The proper performance is not so much the following of a prescribed
198 pattern, though there may be and usually is such a pattern, if general,
[778] but rather the transference of *pepo* so that by contact with *pepo* the
[761] song or the whistle becomes *mota*. Singing or whistling not so
[533] touched with *pepo* is "empty noise," and doubly bad. Whistling is
widely used to arrest action of any kind. In everyday life, whistling
brings the movement of all hunters and beaters to an immediate still-
ness and stops all sound among them. The sign for them to continue
is an imitated animal cry. In the camp, if someone thinks he hears a
foreign sound—of approaching people or game, of a "crying" tree (a
tree starts creaking some days before it falls, and this is referred to
as "crying")—he whistles to call for silence so that all may listen and
[533] hear. During the *molimo* songs, particularly, but during any song, also,
● [765] whistling softly brings the song to an end. A sudden storm is likely
[821] to bring shrill whistles, though nobody claims to even hope for them
[789] to stop the storm, though they all say it is worth trying. They ex-
plain that whistling is effective in other realms because it is the af-
fair of the Mbuti, but it will not stop a storm because that is the
affair of the forest.[8]

534 All such whistling is done with the lips. Whistles are also made of
824 seeds and carved from wood, however, and though the seed-whistles
[198] are purely for children to play with, the wooden whistles (*piki*, *segbe*)
[192] have special usages. Rarely, a small whistle may be attached to a net,
and although functional it is never blown. Similar whistles are used
by those net-hunters who build a hunting fire in the camp, and are
placed within the vine circle surrounding the fire, again not blown.
Larger whistles made of two semicylindrical sections of wood and
bound together by vine or *nkusa* twine, tapering to a point at one
end (left open so it can be stopped with a finger) and notched for
blowing at the other end, are sometimes attached to a fur cap worn
by hunters, and may be blown before the hunt, possibly during a hunt-
[222] ing dance. Similar whistles made of *angbe* wood, from the *angbe*
[825] tree that provides most of the honey, are used during the honey season

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[8] Cooper (1941, 24 seq.), in drawing comparisons between the Semang, Andamanese, and Eta, finds much similar interest in noise.

534
"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of 824
summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the 222
game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily. 825

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. 198
Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the 822
men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*. 462

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey dif- 201
ferent ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being 19
described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation in-
dicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is il-
lustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel
sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to
heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that
would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance
to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the 182
Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talk- 778
ing" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use 822
of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that
something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song 533
should be considered as *mota nengo, mota ngbekbekbei*, the "stron- 822
gest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mys- 778
teriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the 19
forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, [761]
not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, some-
times imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to
suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most
often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references
to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the 533
forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the 778
molimo festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* 765 •
is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, [829]
and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet [534]
that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the
Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness.
But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently
effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied
simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry
752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many
757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to
clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and
mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know
how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild
stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite.
So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient
becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event
leading to the greater *molimo*.

778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the
[224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If
[775] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation,
then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or
778 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire
796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest
533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the
[782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary
only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it
will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as
being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that
time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an
indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not
[533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*,
[535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and
[765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo*
is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will
be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all
there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although
[626] there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be
the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the
greater molimo.

greater *molimo*. In the case of a hunting *molimo*, the initiative is 796 taken by the younger hunters, who sit together around a fire and simply begin singing. [533] In the case of sickness, the initiative is taken by the adult men of the family concerned if the sick person is a child, and if the sick person is an adult the *molimo* will be initiated by his or her male age mates.

The hunting inevitably gets better sooner or later, and the lesser [224] *molimo*, once begun, will continue until it does. But sickness may [776] develop into death, in which case there will be an immediate change of camp, following an uncomplicated and informal burial, and the commencement of the greater *molimo*.

THE GREATER *MOLIMO* (*molimo mangbo*) 765 •

In a previous account (Turnbull, 1960, pp. 307–340), the general procedure of the greater *molimo* was outlined, and it was indicated that there is no set rule as to when a greater *molimo* should be held. Certainly it is not held for every death within the band, not even for every adult death. It may, on the other hand, be held for a child. It is [828] largely a question of *roho*, and this is determined by a number of considerations such as the nature of the death, the importance of the deceased to the band, and the general tenor of life in the band at that moment, particularly the condition of hunting. A combination of [778] poor hunting and ill humor and general sickness, associated with the death of a child, even of a stranger child temporarily within the band, may well occasion a *molimo*, for the total combination indicates that the forest is "sleeping" (*é langé toro*). On the other hand, the death of a great hunter, through his own fault or through sickness but at a time of good hunting and general contentment, may pass unmarked except by the usual summary burial and change of camp, all expression of grief being confined to the immediate family concerned.

One other consideration not without importance is the fact that whoever initiates a *molimo* festival undertakes a responsibility that may become a burden. He has to see that everyone cooperates in providing food, [261] and when, as sometimes happens, the response is meager, he has somehow to provide enough himself for the society's evening repast. As a greater *molimo* is not likely to last under a month, except possibly for a child under circumstances which otherwise become quickly improved, the economic burden is one to cause careful consideration.

765 An occasion such as that described (Turnbull, *ibid.*) for old Balekimito
828 would lead to a greater *molimo* without any hesitation, however,
157 for the death of this much loved old lady affected everyone's *roho*. On the other hand, the *molimo* held for Cephu's daughter Teresa was initiated by Njobo, Cephu claiming he did not have a trumpet. It was held not so much out of respect for the girl but because conditions were bad at the time, there being much sickness and discontent. However, Cephu did not seem to be pulling his own weight, economically, and so the festival came to an abrupt end after only a week. If people found their *roho* upset at all, that was more because of Cephu's cupidity than because of the death of his daughter.

761 To recapitulate the essential elements of the greater *molimo*, as held for Balekimito:

Death is accepted as a natural event and does not lead to any accusations of witchcraft or sorcery, except in the village context. Such grief as is expressed is genuine, and not formal, again except in the village context. It is accepted with regret, and although regarded as natural and inevitable, there is nonetheless a feeling that this is the
761 one really imperfect thing in Mbuti life. The expressed belief that
778 death comes when the forest is sleeping does not quite tally with the factual acceptance of death by the Mbuti, but there is absolutely no feeling of resentment or blame attached to the forest because of death. The felt need to "awaken" the forest and to "rejoice" the forest is occasioned more by the fact that all the living have been brought closer to death and have, to some extent, been touched by it. They consequently need reassurance, not only for the continuation of their own lives but for the continuity of the Mbuti.

764 The factual attitude to death is seen in the practice of burial, which in the forest is performed as simply and quickly as possible. It is prolonged and attended by ritual only in the village context (see p. 74
[594] *seq.*, 143). Burial is primarily the concern of the immediate nuclear family, who may be assisted by friends or relatives. Too much display
765 of grief is considered very bad, and one of the major concerns of the
[152] ensuing *molimo* is to reaffirm life. In a sense, then, the *molimo* is more properly associated with life, occasioned though it may be by death.

[768] The burial over, the camp is abandoned and the mourners are at once under an even stricter obligation to minimize their demonstrations of grief. The opening of the *molimo* festival is informal and casual, and depends on how long it takes for the new camp to get set-

tled, how good the weather is, and whether or not visiting relatives or 765
friends are expected. Within a few days, however, the festival will begin, 765
and from the moment of its inception its stated concern is to 778
awaken and, even more important, to rejoice the forest. The lesser
molimo is more often spoken of as "awakening" the forest (*su kongi
ndura*), though that too has to be done in a way that will rejoice it.
The greater *molimo* should ideally be a festival of sheer joy. The 765
course of the festival becomes more and more a symbolic triumph of 372
life over death, the death of the individual being recognized in the
final dramatic stamping out of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life. This is [535]
not done, however, until time and time again the fire has been attacked
in an effort to destroy it, but has been regenerated by the
dances of the men, who in a dance that imitates the act of copulation,
with the fire as their partner, fan the scattered fire back into a blaze of
life.

It is normally the old woman, who is an integral part of every greater 765
molimo, who either by herself or with a girl attacks the fire, dancing 372
through it and scattering it all around. Thus the woman who gives 561
birth to life also seeks to destroy it. She is referred to by no title other 462
than "mother," the same term of address used for the forest in its
capacity as giver of life and death. It is primarily the young men who
hastily rebuild the fire and fan it back into a blaze with their dance of
life. It is frequently said that the women used to possess the *molimo*,
but it was stolen from them by the men, and this dance, together with
the tying up of the men by the old lady (Turnbull, *ibid.*, p. 323),
may well represent in part this early conflict, and the attempt of the
women to regain possession of the *molimo*. Whatever the symbolism,
it is nowhere clearly stated by the Mbuti, each individual claiming to
see something different in the performance. It is generally agreed,
however, that it shows how strong the women are, and that they
have to be respected by men.

Whether or not there is thought to be any correlation with *pepo* 765
(breath), the power of breath to fan sparks into fire is demonstrated 372
when coals are placed in the end of the *molimo* trumpet. The singer 761 778
blows as he sings, and the sparks that fly out of the end of the trumpet 534
are greeted by murmurs or even shouts of acclaim.

The trumpet is sometimes referred to as an "animal" of the forest, 765
though this is generally in connection with its morning appearance. 534
Nonetheless it is referred to as needing food and water, and these it
symbolically receives. It is also passed through the *molimo* fire and [372]

765 given fire to eat, just as water is passed through it to "cool" it. It is
372 rubbed with ashes and earth. It is brought into direct contact with
534 every individual by being passed over their heads as they sit around the
fire singing, and each individual will at some time or another, at his
own whim, scoop up ashes and rub the trumpet with them. And in
[535] the evening appearances of the trumpet at the *molimo* hearth, while
[831] the singer holds one end to his mouth and sings, the youth holding
the far end pumps it up and down as he dances in imitation of the sexual act, sometimes holding the mouth of the trumpet close to his
genitals, imitating the part of either man or woman. Little doubt is
left about the symbolic connection between fire and life.*

765 There is an important distinction between the evening and the
561 morning appearances of the *molimo* trumpet, and between the roles
533 played by different age groups. In the evening the singing is primarily
in control of the *mangesé*, or elders. Frequently, they have their own
fire, the hunters have theirs, and the *kiyana*, or male youths, have
theirs. Everyone joins in the singing, the elders maintaining over-all
control and the hunters being the most prominent singers, except for
the *molimo*-trumpet singer, who may be a youth or a young hunter,
being chosen because of his ability as a singer rather than for any
[535] other reason. It is the youths that do most of the dancing at their fire
or at the central *molimo* fire (from which theirs is made by taking
burning embers and setting them separately). The whole intent of
the evening is to rejoice the forest, and this is done by singing throughout the night, and by eating a feast specially prepared from food contributed to the *molimo* hearth. (Just as with food, so with firewood
and with fire itself—every single household in the camp is expected to
contribute.) In the early days of the festival the old lady does not ap-
[535] pear, and there is no attempt to stamp out the fire, though erotic
[831] dances are constantly being danced around and over it. It is only toward the end of the festival that the nightlong songfest is dramatized by the appearance of the old lady, her dancing through the fire
in an attempt to destroy it, and her tying up of the men (referred to
765 as both tying up the hunt and tying up the *molimo*). The evening
meetings of the *molimo*, though full of the joy the Mbuti wish to
convey to the forest, are nonetheless solemn in that the purpose is

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[831] * Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus the association of the male *molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context. Elsewhere, this precise symbolism seems unimportant, the important factor being simply the trumpet's masculinity.

never lost sight of. The trumpet itself, while avowedly an "animal" 765
whose animal noises (mainly in imitation of elephant and leopard) 534
are designed to scare women and children and keep them in their huts, is the only sign of the presence of a supernatural power. The main function of the trumpet is to sing, and to pass on the song of the Mbuti into the forest. It is taken off to a distance from where it picks up the song from the men around the *molimo* hearth and echoes it on into the night. This way, the Mbuti say, the forest is sure to hear it and be pleased.

Normally a trumpet is kept high up, concealed in a tree. During a festival, however, it is kept in water except when in use, for it is considered to represent the power of the forest for chastisement. Keeping it in water keeps it "cool." It acts, it seems, as an intermediary, passing on the song of the Mbuti to the forest, but returning in the morning with power, and sometimes with anger. When it appears in the [533]
morning, just before dawn, the men have had at the most an hour's sleep, and this is a signal for them to begin singing again. An adult male who fails to sing during a greater *molimo* festival is allegedly killed, and when the trumpet appears in the morning its first act is to search for sleeping men. It is held by a number of youths, who run up and down the camp in search (this may also happen during the evening). But then, to show its power, the trumpet is carried from hut to hut, the youths beating on each with branches and tearing leaves off the roofs. The huts of any troublemakers are particularly singled out, though with due regard for the process described under "Government," by which individual blame is avoided. The older men and even the women may yell at the *molimo* to go away, or to go back to the water, but on this occasion the youths are effectively in charge. There is generally a mock battle in which some of the youths will try to block the path of the trumpet, borne by other youths, or to deflect it in another direction. There may even be a tug-of-war, with some youths pulling it in one direction, some in another, though such contests are formal and enacted more as a dance than as an actual test of strength. All the time, those carrying the trumpet keep it concealed behind leafy branches, or simply by holding it between them. In the end it is carried out of the camp triumphantly as dawn breaks, and with a few defiant bellows returns to its secret hiding place in the water. A vine stretched across the stream warns women [784]
and children to keep away.

It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as

765 It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as
534 sacred in itself, hidden though it may be. There was one instance
778 when a trumpet was stolen by a member of a different family and a different band, simply because it had such a good "voice" and could sing so well. Whatever power it possesses it is believed to possess through the quality of its "voice." The fact that it can be stolen or lost (they sometimes get washed away in the floods that follow a particularly torrential downpour), without causing any ritual crisis, is in keeping with the lack of concern for inheritance of the trumpet. It is said by youths that anyone who wants to make one can have it, but that if they do not want to be bothered they need not, for "the *molimo* is a lot of work." Elders, however, say clearly that there used
[613] to be one for each family, and by family they plainly defined a minimal lineage, all male members descended from a single living grandfather or from the same father, living or dead.

765 The fact that they also say that the *molimo* used to be the concern
534 of the band only, perhaps indicates an earlier but now less pronounced
[611] emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent; be that as it may, a
[174] noted feature of *molimo* festivals today is their utterly nonlineal nature (Tables 9 and 10).[1] With reference to the greater *molimo* held for Balekimito, there were at one time three *molimo* trumpets in action, only one of which belonged to a member of Balekimito's lineage, the second belonging to her son, the third to Kokoyo, whose wife's stepmother's brother was married to a woman of the same clan as Balekimito—a rather distant claim to lineage—but Kokoyo and Ekianga brought out their *molimo* trumpets because their *roho* wanted it.
[621] Thus, by this means they emphasized the importance not of lineage membership but of membership of the band, and the *molimo*, as of old, was at least a band festival, if not a lineage festival.

765 A more systematic analysis in the next chapter shows the impor-
621 tance of the *molimo* festival as an integrating factor in Mbuti life,
771 and indeed the importance of their whole religious system, based as
778 it is upon a belief in the benevolence of a forest spirit or power. It can,
181 for the moment, be seen clearly enough that it expresses among other
182 things the latent antagonisms that exist between the sexes, because of the same lack of clear, formal sex delineations that characterize the *molimo* itself. It also unites the band (regardless of kinship considerations) in a common expression of the dependence of the Mbuti upon the forest, not only as an economic entity but also as a spiritual entity, a spiritual power that looks after their needs but which is also able to inflict hardship and punishment. The *molimo* heightens

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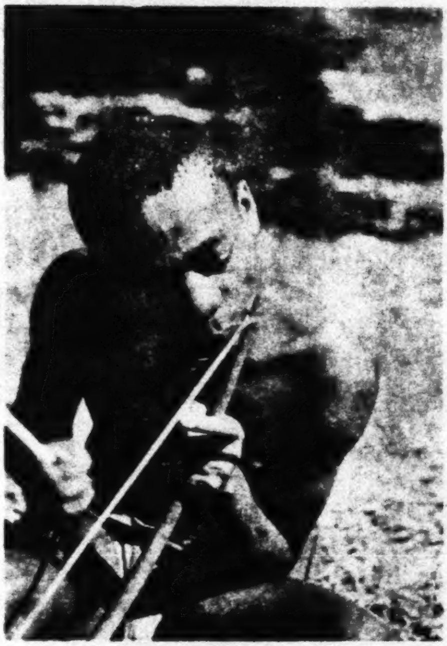
[1] [see page 331 -- Analyst]

765

the practical economic dependency of the Mbuti upon the forest, 621
which is felt and acknowledged, by forcing an acknowledgment of 771
the most basic dependency of all, that of life and death. The associa- 778
tion with the festival of all the basic elements—fire, water, air and 181
earth—and the central importance of food and sex, all combine to 182
create a highly direct, personal and intimate relationship between
the Mbuti and the forest, while at the same time binding them to-
gether as a band, the one individual dependent upon the next.

[P 276-K]



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39. The musical bow, apart from the wooden clappers used during the *molimo* and during the honey season, is the only musical instrument that seems to be original to the Mbuti. Even this is slightly used, the one here simply being a hunting bow tapped by an arrow, the mouth acting as the resonator. An extremely musical people, the Mbuti are, unlike the villagers, vocal rather than instrumental.

40. Balekimito, the old lady who "died well," and for whom the exceptionally long *molimo* festival was held. The charm around her neck, stolen from the villagers, would have been regarded by the Arabized Ngwana as powerful magic. For her it was a mere ornament.

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2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.276-L]

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[765]
[784]
[534]

41. A spot like this, in the Lelo River, was the resting place of the *molimo* trumpets used in honor of Balekimito. Vines are stretched across the stream to warn intruders to keep away. The precaution, however, is as much for fear of theft as for fear of desecration.

sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three 577 principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, 778 even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the 626 forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experience 121 [114] it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akami*, which kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the obvious 621 practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological 778 determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of organization 181 must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself, for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total absence 778 of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as 533 such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have [189] seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforcement, through musical technique, of the values of age and cooperation, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure 765 • from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be 181 regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society 121 and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of religious 182 ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recreation of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and 761 inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens 182 more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased. Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted
761 with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and
152 avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable
778 fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly
182 and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow
at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all
the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing,
765 feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have
182 seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into
621 age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who
535 demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the
831 *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea*
may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over
the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers,
fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in
the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet
itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently
expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

765 The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its
621 interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship
182 considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*,
may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is
significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including
not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band
under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such
death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed
as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears,
some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would
bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

778 Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death,
824 just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength
761 through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden
[789] charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant,
if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

372 Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed,
[778] is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One
[761] legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by
[773] woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately
stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their
372 hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The
765 *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

in their mouths, or hold them in their hands. Burning coals are put 372
in the mouth of the trumpet. When the trumpet enters the camp at 765 •
night it is preceded by a youth carrying burning embers which he waves in the air and touches to the ground to leave a trail of glowing cinders, the "footsteps" of the *molimo*. And of course the *molimo* fire is the object of attention of the old lady and her attendant. The final extinction of the fire is the signal for the return of the *molimo* to the forest, and the end of the festival.

The festival emphasizes and reaffirms everything of importance in 765
the life of the Mbuti. And perhaps one of the most important things 621
it emphasizes is accompanied by the least ritual—the closing of the 182
path leading to the village. To the same end, but more dramatic, is 186
the way in which a *molimo* festival will come to a complete halt if a 829
villager comes to the camp. For the *molimo* not only reaffirms the unity of the band; it reaffirms the unity of the Mbuti in opposition to the village. It is essentially a "matter of the forest," and the entire system that it upholds operates only in relation to the forest.

In the same way that a solitary villager can transform a forest camp into a village camp, just by his presence, so is any contact between the two worlds, except one of opposition, impossible. The system that the *molimo* recreates in the forest, the very life of the Mbuti that in itself is a ritual of pleasing the forest, cannot persist in the
village. The ritual closing of the path is clearly symbolic of the Mbuti [177]*
concern to keep the village out of the forest, to keep the two worlds apart. When they, as individuals or as a band, leave the forest and visit the village, they do precisely that—they leave the forest. It is this opposition, which is so sharply defined in the *molimo*, that is the basis of the Mbuti relationship with the villagers.

widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be 177*
supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action 18
and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the 186
nkumbi seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power 224
over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by [881]
Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as [789]
Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt
was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by
the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs 177*
into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural oppo- 754
sition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause
to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as
they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister
ring of conviction.[9]

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible sym- 177*
bolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppo- 761
sitions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, 182
unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/
silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last
two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the [776]
Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with
which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And [778]
they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural,
the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immoral- 182
ity, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death 761
for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and con- 765
tinuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called 561
that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional con-
cern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces [578]
those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age
divisions are clearly symbolized in the three fires for the three upper
age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is empha-
sized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division
along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to
share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

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[9] Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of KiNgwana, KiBira and KiLesé, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

182 and fathers when youths go around trying to snare food from each
761 hut (the women ultimately letting them have it, often ostenta-
• 765 tiously). The opposition of adjacent age levels, and particularly the
561 hostility between sons and fathers, is plainly manifest in the morning
778 rampages of the *molimo* trumpet. The forest itself is symbolized by
[593] the leaves that conceal the trumpet (itself the symbol of the life-giving organ), and *ekimi* is the avowed objective sought through song. *Akami*, its antithesis, is symbolized again in the morning rampage, frequently a physical battle between older and younger youths (dividing brothers) and between youths and hunters, and always a wordy battle, with the hunters winning if for no other reason than that there is a limit to the energy even of Mbuti youths.

182 Thus the *molimo* admirably reinforces social values and allows for
761 the harmless expression of hostility in areas of conflict. The only sym-
765 bolic representation of sexual conflict is *ekokomea*, and of course the
83 fire dance. But here the symbolism runs deeper, and concerns the
392 ultimate end, for just as *akami* is associated with death, so is *ekimi* associated with life. The fire is not as realistically symbolic as the trumpet, though it is undoubtedly as feminine as the trumpet is masculine. But it is impossible not to be reminded of other instances of the use of fire and sex symbolism.[10]

761 And perhaps we should see this concern with life not only in terms
181 of the threat of death from the village. Death is a threat to all societies, and for the Mbuti it is probably the one imperfection in an otherwise perfect life; that is to say, it is the one thing for which they have no certain answer, and to a practical people such as the Mbuti uncertainty is imperfection.

*177 Ultimately the efforts of the Mbuti, if not of their system, are directed to keeping the villagers physically out of the forest, an effort that is successful largely because the villagers are only too thankful
*177 not to have to go into the forest. But just the fact that one villager
754 can set up a fishing camp in mid-forest and be visited by other villagers, or that a chief can send his representative to a hunting camp to demand (but not necessarily obtain) meat, means that even the forest

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[771] [10] For instance, Audrey Richards (1956) writes of the Bemba that access to the ancestral spirits is to be had through the correct handling of fire and sex, and stresses (*ibid.*, p. 30, *seq.*) the ritual association of sex, blood and fire as the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behavior of the Bemba. Hocart would certainly have seen the *molimo*, and the "baptism of fire" (when Moké passes his hands through the flames and rubs them over his face, then gently touches the hands of all those around), as a request "for the gift of undying life" (Hocart, 1952, p. 47).

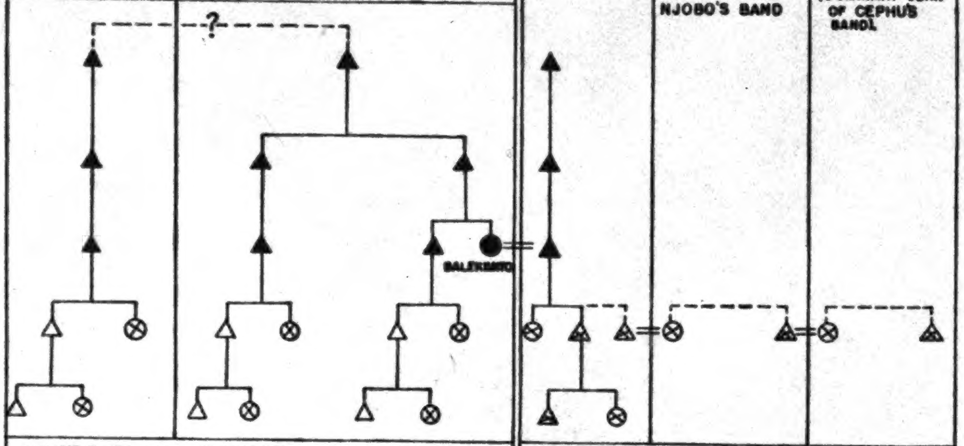
TABLE 9

SCHEMATISED GENEALOGY SHOWING AGNATIC PARTICIPATION ALLOWED ACCORDING TO VILLAGE CUSTOM

TABLE 10

AFFINAL MEMBERS OF GROUP BARRED FROM PARTICIPATION ACCORDING TO VILLAGE CUSTOM

PUEMI (2)	PUEMI (1) (DOMINANT CLAN OF NJOBO'S BAND)	BOMASUA	OTHER CLANS AND LINEAGES OF NJOBO'S BAND	BAMBAKA (DOMINANT CLAN OF CEPHU'S BAND)



ANALYSIS OF FULL GENEALOGY SHOWING ACTUAL PER- | CENTAGE OF CONSANGUINEAL AND AFFINAL

PARTICIPATION IN MOLIMO FOR | BALEKIMITO

<table>
<tr><td>△ = 14.9 %
○ = 12.7 %</td><td>△ = 12.1 %
○ = 16.4 %</td><td>△ = 8.1 %
○ = 18.2 %</td><td>△ = 43.3 %
○ = 34.5 %</td><td>△ = 21.6 %
○ = 18.2 %</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">△ = 27.0 %
○ = 29.1 %</td><td colspan="3">△ = 73.0 %
○ = 70.9 %</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">△ = 35.1 %
○ = 47.3 %</td><td colspan="2">△ = 64.9 %
○ = 52.7 %</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">△ = 78.4 %
○ = 81.8 %</td><td>△ = 21.6 %
○ = 18.2 %</td></tr>
</table>

▲ = DECEASED

◬, ⊗ = NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

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342 closed on hinges. The only other hut to have a door was that of
[184] Njobo, which was at the opposite end and also faced down the middle, but not quite so blatantly as Ekianga's. The rest had leaf-covered frames which were simply pulled across the opening to close it.

342 My house was built opposite Njobo's, with the old witch Sau
123 and her son Amabosu to my right. At first the Pygmies were going
122 to build me the biggest house ever built in the forest—bigger than Camp Putnam. We finally compromised and when the framework of interlaced saplings was finished I had two rooms, each about ten
[476] feet square. Even so, I knew it would never be finished, for by then the number of workers was dropping off rapidly; so I suggested mudding the walls of only one room, but leafing the whole roof so that our "village" would have a veranda. This was thought to be a fine idea.

761 One day I was on my way out to the plantation with Kenge,
763 Manyalibo and Moke, when on the way we met Cephu's handsome
152 nephew, Kelemoke, a very light-skinned youth who had two children even lighter than he. He was wailing and crying, and told us that Cephu's daughter, only a few years old, had just died. He then
761 continued on his way, wailing loudly. I expected the others to turn
763 back, but they continued as though nothing had happened. Kenge
152 made some remark about Cephu's virility and the others snorted with
522 laughter. Kenge had the charming habit of laughing at his own jokes, which seemed funnier to him the more he thought about them, so he was still clapping his side and doubling up and shouting to the forest what a funny joke it was when we reached the plantation.
763 Then he stopped. Although we could see nobody, Moke called out
761 quietly that Cephu's daughter had died, and Njobo and Masisi and
152 a few others appeared from where they had been "working," looking rather cross at being disturbed. Njobo said it was a nuisance. The
[765] girl was his wife's niece, and this meant that his wife would keep

him awake with her wailing and would probably forget to cook for 763 761 him. He set off at once for the village, grumbling, and Moke went 152 with him. Masisi started one of his loud tirades, saying in his sharp [765] voice that Cephu never looked after his children properly, so it was no wonder they died. This must have reminded Kenge of his joke, [522] because he started laughing again, or perhaps he was laughing at Masisi, but Masisi got angrier than ever and said he was going straight to the village to tell Cephu what he thought of him. He stamped angrily after Njobo and Moke, still shouting deprecating remarks about the bereaved father.

Kenge laughed happily and said that there was going to be a dreadful noise when Masisi got back to the village, so we would do better to stay where we were until it was all over. Manyalibo, who [222] had not said a word, suggested looking for *itaba*, a sweet edible root, and with food our foremost thought we set off.

When we got back to the village in the late afternoon we found everyone sitting around outside their little houses, staring gloomily at nothing in particular. Masisi was still talking loudly, pointing at the sky and over in the direction of Cephu's camp, from which I could hear women wailing, and saying that it was a shame that Cephu should let his children die and cause everyone so much trouble. Tungana mournfully said that he didn't like funerals; the [764] Negroes made so much noise at them. Masisi's younger brother, [589] Mambunia, still a bachelor because one of his legs was crippled with [732] paralysis and he was not able to hunt well enough to support a family, added in shrill falsetto that Cephu was so inconsiderate and such a trouble-maker that he would probably let his daughter die completely—completely and absolutely.

I did not understand what he meant at first, but it provoked an 763 761 immediate response from Asofalinda, Ekianga's widowed sister. She 152 strode across the camp, marching with long swinging strides to 578 where Mambunia was sitting, his paralyzed leg stuck out in front

000 village at all costs. Rather to my surprise this struck the Pygmies as
P 764 being funny, and they began sniggering. Kenge, carefully dusting
177 the last specks of earth from his spotless shorts, pretended to be
522 severe and said this was no time for laughter. He then promptly
cracked a joke at the expense of the Negroes and joined his friends
P in howls of mirth. When Pygmies laugh it is hard not to be af-
[201] fected; they hold onto one another as if for support, slap their sides,
snap their fingers, and go through all manner of physical contortions.
If something strikes them as particularly funny they will even roll on
the ground, but this time the disapproving looks they got from the
Negroes discouraged them.

C The Negroes, having restored order, went on to the business of
761 settling who was responsible for the death of the child. To them no
764 death is natural; some evil spirit, some witch or sorcerer, had cursed
the girl with dysentery and made her die. They tried to find out
who had been fighting in Cephu's camp, who were the enemies of
the girl's family. Their concern was a real one, for if the witch was
P not found, it might strike at them next. But the Pygmies were not
[761] co-operative. They were bored and listless. The girl had died and
[177] that was that. The Negroes finally gave up and we all returned,
washing from head to foot as we crossed over the Nepussi.

P Back in the main camp everything was normal. Only in Cephu's
765 little camp was there quiet, subdued wailing from the house of the
child's parents. There was some discussion as to whether or not the
molimo should be called out. Cephu said in an aggressive manner
that it should be, the only trouble being that he didn't have one.
Certain families own them; others do not but when in need can
borrow them from relatives. Cephu promptly called on Njobo, who
reluctantly agreed.

That night, after the evening meal, a small number of men from the main camp went over to Cephu's camp and sat down around the central fire. The women and children were in their huts; some

talking, some sleeping, some sobbing softly. The men started singing, 765
and after a while I heard their song echoed from far off in the
forest and recognized the wistful sound, hollow and ghostly, answering
the men with snatches of their own song, sometimes singing
its own variations, sometimes breaking off into low, growling, animal
noises. The men continued singing as though nothing were happening,
and I heard the molimo coming closer, circling around the
camp. The women were all quiet in their huts now, and the fire had
burned low; the camp was pitch dark except for an occasional glow
where the ashes of some family hearth still glowed faintly outside a
hut. Even near a village, Cephu never built huts in imitation of the [342]
Negroes, and his camp was a typical forest camp, a close little circle [177]
of small conical huts, made of a framework of saplings covered entirely [361]
with leaves.

The molimo was silent for a few minutes and I looked at the faces
of the men around our fire, which was flickering faintly in the middle
of the camp. They were all staring at the flames, their eyes wide
open but seeing things I had never seen. Only Cephu was lying back
in his chair, and he seemed to be asleep. There was a slight movement
beside me and I heard the molimo almost in my ear. The 765
sound was gentler and a little sad; it was now singing closely with 534
the men, as if answering their song. Amabosu had joined the group 533
and was on my left, and I saw that he had his hands up to his mouth.
Then in the shadows I saw that he was singing into what looked
like a long length of bamboo, a sort of trumpet, which was producing
that eerie, hollow sound. After a few minutes he stood up. One
of Tungana's sons also stood up, and I could see that he was holding
the other end of the trumpet. The two danced around the fire, waving
the bamboo tube over the flames, Amabosu singing into it all
the time and the men's chorus growing louder and louder. Then the
two performers dashed suddenly away into the forest behind the
camp, and after a few leopardlike growls the trumpet was heard no

765 533 [534] more. The men continued singing for about another hour, but as by then Cephu and the rest of his family had gone inside their huts, they stopped abruptly and returned to the main camp.

The next evening the singing was around a fire in the middle of the main camp. After all, the molimo was Njobo's, and Cephu just went to sleep, so why should we go to his camp? A few men from Cephu's family came over, but not Cephu. The singing went on for about four hours, but the molimo did not appear again. The third night it was the same, except that nobody turned up from Cephu's camp.

[858] I thought this a little strange and asked Moke about it. He said that normally one would not call out the molimo for a child; that was why nobody was really enthusiastic, but Cephu had insisted. Besides, the molimo should only be in the forest, not so close to a Negro village. It was all right to sing molimo songs as long as there were no Negroes about, but even then it was not good to sing them [774] near a village. The molimo itself, however, should come out only in the forest, where it belonged, and there was a lot of work attached, as it had to be given food to eat, water to drink, and fire to keep it warm. He stopped there and could not be persuaded to go any further. He just waved his hands in the air and said emphatically that this molimo was empty, meaningless, a farce.

765 177 186 At the end of a week the mourning period prescribed by the Negroes was over; the women, who were meant to wail at sunrise, noon and sunset, stopped wailing. A relative of Cephu's Negro "master" had come over to the village the night before, and the men had had a final burst of singing for him, but with their tongues in their cheeks. Moke told me not to think that this was a real molimo; it was what they did for the villagers to make them think their molimo was the same as the Pygmies'. The villagers also make use of a musical instrument called the *molimo*, but it is meant to represent the

765 • 177 186 voice of the clan totem, and it makes only animal sounds—it does not sing.

To end the period of mourning there had to be a feast, a great deal of the food being supplied by the Bantu. I felt that this was really why the Pygmies went through with the Negro funeral ceremony. Everyone was in high spirits. Even Cephu and his group joined the festivities, glad that there was no longer any need for the women to wail, constantly reminding them of a death they would rather forget. [761] It is better to forget the dead quickly, the Pygmies said, instead of making yourself remember them all the time, as the villagers do. When referring to the Bantu in this way, disparaging them or their customs, they used one of two terms, one meaning "animal," the other "savage"; the Negroes used the same terms about the Pygmies, and there was no great feeling of mutual respect.

763 At the height of the festivity there was a sudden cry from the roadside, swelling into a burst of wailing that was infinitely more terrible than anything I had heard before. It was certainly worse than when Cephu's poor little girl had died for ever. Then old Balekimito, the much-loved mother of Ekianga and his dead brother Kolongo and of starchy old Asofalinda, was carried into the camp. She had been ill for some time, but as she was an old woman nobody had thought much of it. She had been ill before and not died completely, not even just died. But now she had died completely and absolutely, and her great hulking son, the great hunter, the man of substance with three wives, hairy, ugly Ekianga, was running up and down, his face streaked with tears, beating himself on the head with his fists and crying that his mother was going to die for ever.

Balekimito was carried gently over to her son's house, through the wooden door, and laid on the floor just inside. I went in to see her. The poor old woman was so thin I could see every bone in her weak, tired body; yet when I had last seen her she had been fine, upright, strong, and a powerful old matriarch if ever there was one.

763 atmosphere was so tense I wondered if there was at last going to be
761 a real accusation of witchcraft, though from what I had seen the
Pygmies had no great belief in such things. But Moke's first words put me at ease. Choking back a little sob, he managed to say in a matter-of-fact way, "She died well."

There was a general nodding of heads. Manyalibo, who was a nephew of Balekimito's, said in his gruff way that everyone should be happy that she had lived so long, happy that she had died so well, and that all this wailing should stop at once. He added that the death was a "big thing," and that it was a "matter for the forest."
[765] There was a silence, and, looking around to make sure that there
were no women about, Manyalibo announced, "I shall call out my molimo, and we will feast not for a week but for a month, or two months, or even three; we shall feast the molimo and make the forest happy."

763 Njobo, the great elephant hunter, had the final say. He stirred
[555] the fire idly with a stick, sending showers of sparks and ashes up
[829] into the warm air. "We have been in the village too long," he said.
[186] "We should have gone back to the forest before; that is where we
[768] belong. Now we must go back, far away from the village and from
the people of the village. It is a bad place."

He said that a few would stay behind to finish the work on my house, but that the rest of us should gather together all the food we could and be ready to move within a couple of days. The next day we would put Balekimito in the ground, and maybe the day after that we would leave.

At this everyone cheered up visibly and began criticizing the women and children who were still pouring in and out of Ekianga's
[152] house, beating themselves and crying. Masisi said crossly that they
would never behave this way if they were in the forest, and as he
[828] talked he raised his voice until he worked himself into a real temper.
He stalked out of the veranda and down to the far end of the little

village, brandishing one hand above his head, telling everyone to 763
stop making such a dreadful noise, that it was not doing any good
to anybody. "Crying is a matter for the immediate family," he said. [152]
"She was a mother to us all, but for all of us to cry is just too much
noise." He clutched his head to illustrate the point, then grabbed a
couple of children, one of them his own, and sent them flying. By
now his temper was no longer artificial, and the women decided it
was wiser to keep out of his way, and left.

As soon as the wailing stopped and the door to Ekianga's house
was closed, with only the family inside, the cloud of depression lifted.
Everyone started talking about the imminent return to the forest— [166]
about where they would go to hunt, where they would go for mushrooms
and for fruit and nuts and honey, and where they should
make their first camp. All agreed that it should be far away—but
not so far that old Tungana could not come.

That night there was a little wailing from Ekianga's house, and a few women both in the main camp and in Cephu's camp were crying to themselves. Every now and then Masisi's sharp voice was raised, telling them all to go to sleep.

The funeral took place the following morning, again conducted 765
by the Negroes. Balekimito was buried next to Cephu's daughter, 177
and once again, when the grave had been filled in and the women [764]
had left, the Negroes tried to conduct a council to discover who had
been responsible for the death. But the Pygmies were in no mood to
play games. They simply walked off after the women, washed themselves
perfunctorily in the Nepussi and returned to the camp to start
preparations for going back to the forest.

After all, if Balekimito had died she had died well, and there
was a lot to do—plantations to raid and food to steal. This was no [186]
time to fool around with Negro notions of witchcraft and sorcery;
this was a time to get back to the forest as quickly as possible and
to hold the biggest molimo festival the forest had ever seen, to make
the forest happy again.

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

For an hour the
others lay around the fire, while I was pushed into a corner, and 517
discussed where they would go to hunt the next day and which girls 521
they would flirt with. They poked sleepily at the fire, sending up 512
showers of sparks and filling the hut with smoke. In all the huts
around us, families were chatting among themselves in a drowsy
way, and occasionally some eavesdropper shouted a suitable comment,
bringing a burst of laughter from all the nearby huts. The leaf walls
keep out no sound at all, and anything said in an ordinary speaking
voice can be heard four or five huts away. But before long the voices
got sleepier and sleepier, and finally the only sounds were the chirping
of crickets, the soft swishing of the already swollen Lelo, and
the quiet falsetto of Makubasi as he sat outside his hut, all alone
by a blazing fire. He held his baby son on his lap, and sang a lullaby, [533]
half to himself and half to the child. He was still singing when [854]
I went to sleep.

The next morning the camp was up at dawn, and before it was 512
properly light there was hardly a soul left about—only old Tungana, [887]
sitting where his son Makubasi had sat the night before and like
his son singing to the baby on his knee. Kenge said that some of [224]
the men had gone hunting early, because they needed a lot of meat [765] •
to begin the molimo festival for Balekimito and they did not want to
start until they had plenty of food. The rest of the men and women [313]
were out cutting the leaves and saplings needed to finish building the [314]
camp. We went to join them, not far off. The rest of the day we
spent making the simple furniture of a Pygmy household.

Sticks lashed together and bound by vine thongs to a frame make 352
one of the most uncomfortable beds in the world. The sticks themselves [284]
are comfortable enough, but for some reason these beds are
made so that each end bends sharply upward and however you lie
on it the effect is worse than being in a badly slung hammock. Some [513]
Pygmies don't bother with a bed but just put the sticks on the
ground and lie on them, or sleep on dry leaves. Tables are made

156
832 dabate still had her fine maiden's figure, with firm upstanding breasts.
826 Nobody ever mentioned the fact that they were childless. Kondabate
[842] decorated herself more than any other Pygmy girl I have known,
156 and by every possible means, Negro and Pygmy. She not only dyed
832 302 her body with designs of vines and fruits, painted on with the black
304 juice of the gardenia fruit, but she also had elaborate patterns cicatrized
on her stomach, and her teeth were filed to sharp points so
that when she smiled or laughed, as she frequently did, she looked
[361] just a little dangerous. Kondabate decided to build her house to the
north of the hillock, so that she was next to old Sau, and opposite
her father.

765 During the afternoon Amabosu, Sau's son—the great singer—
went around from hut to hut with Manyalibo's adopted son, Madyadya.
(Manyalibo had offered his molimo for Balekimito's festival,
as Ekianga said he had none.) The two youths stood outside the
[283] entrance to each hut with a basket and a length of cord made from
nkusa vine, the kind of cord used for making hunting nets. Madyadya
held one end of the cord while Amabosu tied the other in a
[262] noose and laid it in the doorway of the hut. The owner of the hut,
or her husband if she was not there, would put a small bunch of
bananas in the noose, or a manioc root, or a bundle of mushrooms,
or perhaps even a small piece of meat, and Madyadya would jerk the
string taut. After a brief mock struggle he would haul in the catch
and put it in his basket, then go on to the next hut. From every hut
765 the two collected an offering of food in this way. When their basket
372 was full they hung it up on a tree stump beside the central fire that
was now blazing between Manyalibo's hut and the hut his daughter
was busily making. This fire had itself been made up from offerings
of wood collected from each family hearth. I remembered seeing
Manyalibo go around taking an ember or log from every fireplace,
whether the owners were there or not.

765 562 I noticed that only men sat at this fire and asked Kenge why this

was. He told me it was the ***kumamolimo,*** "the place of the molimo," 765
and now that everyone was here we were going to start the festival. [562]
The food that had been collected from hut to hut was to feed the molimo, because the molimo was a hungry animal that ate a great deal. He added pointedly that it smoked a great deal too, and when [123]
I gave him several packets of cigarettes he solemnly put them with the food in the molimo basket.

About an hour later, when I was in my hut, I noticed that Ma- 765
kubasi and Ausu were standing outside, obviously wanting to say 123
something. Usually they were not backward about interrupting, and I was puzzled when Ausu beckoned with his head that I should come outside. He whispered in my ear that a few of them were going off to get the molimos, as we were to start the festival that night. Masimongo, Kenge's brother-in-law, had said that he, as well as Manyalibo, wanted to bring out his molimo, and make it a doubly great festival. Half a dozen youths were waiting to see if I would go with [481]
them, but they told me that the place where the molimo lived was a long way off and we would have to run all the way and return when it was dark.

Of course I said I would go, and we started off immediately. But 765
halfway across the camp Masimongo leaped into my way and 123
shouted that I was not to go. For a moment there was a loud and 481
sharp argument, most of which I could not follow. Finally Njobo, to whom everyone always listened, said that he had seen me in the forest and knew I could travel as well and as fast as the others, so that I would be safe. Masisi then objected with a shrill torrent of words, saying that the molimo was none of my business. For a moment I felt like saying I would not go, as I certainly did not want to cause any bad feeling. The others were already moving off at a run, down the path through the glade, not waiting for me.

Njobo pushed me on the shoulder and said to follow quickly, if I was sure I could keep up and would not be afraid of traveling in the

765 forest in the dark. He said the others would not be able to wait for
123 me if I dropped behind; this was a serious matter. As I hesitated he
481 added, in a loud voice directed at everyone in general, but particularly
to Masimongo and Masisi, that the molimo had already sung to me
[885] and no harm had come of it. I was after all an adult, and of the
forest, so there was no reason why I should not go with the others.

He was still talking as I caught up with Makubasi, who was hanging back to see if I was coming. We jumped into the Lelo, more swollen than ever, and struggled across. The water came up to my waist, nearly up to his shoulders. My shoes filled with sand and grit, but there was no time to take them off. As we made our way through the water the others ducked their heads and washed themselves, and I did the same.

When we climbed out on the far side, Ausu, leading, was halfway
up the hill while I was still splashing around trying to find a foot-
[487] hold in the slippery bank. The forest was not dark yet, but it was
very silent, and for once no one made a sound as we ran, following
the antelope trails, toward the north.

481 and very shallow. For the first time we slowed to a walk and stepped
123 through the bubbling water, lifting our feet high so as not to splash.
[133] The forest was silent now, except for the evening chorus of crickets
[136] and frogs, and on the far side of the stream we halted while Ausu
and Makubasi looked around and listened, to reassure themselves
that we were alone.

• 765 I had no idea of how far we had come or in what direction, but
182 I knew we had left the camp far behind. It was the first time I had
191 known a group of Pygmies to be so silent. Normally, unless hunting,
[825] they are deliberately noisy, but now, just at the time that leopards
would be prowling about in search of food, they seemed unwilling
to disturb the forest or the animals it concealed. Just the opposite, in
fact. It was as if they were a part of the silence and the darkness of
the forest itself and were only fearful lest any sound might betray
their presence to some person or thing *not* of the forest.

They stood there, quiet and still, and it struck me with a sudden
shock that not one of them carried a spear or bow and arrow. As
they peered into the dusk and cocked their heads first on this side
then on that, satisfying themselves that we were really alone, it
seemed that they felt themselves so much a part of the forest and of
all the living things in it that they had no need to fear anything
[778] except that which was not of the forest. One of them said to me,
later, "When we are the Children of the Forest, what need have
we to be afraid of it? We are only afraid of that which is outside the
forest."

We stood there, water from the stream still running down our legs,
until they were satisfied that all was well. Then Makubasi nodded
to Madyadya and to another boy. They ran on ahead, and after a
765 whispered discussion two others followed. The rest of us walked slowly
182 on until we came to a small clearing nearby, the far side of which
was only just visible as the last glimmer of daylight dwindled away
into blackness. We stood there waiting, saying nothing. Ausu and

Makubasi wandered about aimlessly, poking here and there from habit 765
to see if there was any tasty fruit to be had for the picking, but it 182
was too dark to see.

Just as I was about to ask where the others had gone they re- 765
appeared, announcing their presence with low whistles that sounded 534
like the call of a night bird. They were in two pairs, each pair carrying between them, over their shoulders, a long slender object. Even at that moment I wondered if they would veer off into the complete blackness of the forest before I could see more closely, but they came on toward us. Madyadya was carrying the rear end of what proved to be a huge tube of some kind, fifteen feet long. He gestured proudly and said, "See, this is our molimo!" Then he
turned and putting his mouth to the end of the trumpet, which it [533]
was, he blew a long, raucous raspberry. Everyone doubled up with [522]
laughter, the first sound they had made since leaving camp.

I was slightly put out by this sacrilege and was about to blame it 765
rather pompously on irreligious youth, when I saw something that 534
upset me even more. I do not know exactly what I had expected, but 123
I knew a little about molimo trumpets and that they were some- 177
times made out of bamboo. I suppose I had expected an object elaborately carved, decorated with patterns full of ritual significance and symbolism, something sacred, to be revered, the very sight or touch of which might be thought of as dangerous. I felt that I had a right, in the heart of the tropical rain forest, to expect something wonderful and exotic. But now I saw that the instrument which produced such a surprisingly rude sound, shattering the stillness as it shattered my illusions, was not made of bamboo or wood, and it certainly was not carved or decorated in any way. It was a length of metal drainpipe, neatly threaded at each end, though somewhat bent in the middle. The second trumpet was just the same, shining and sanitary, but only half the length.

Everyone was looking at me to see what my reactions would be.

765 I asked, keeping my voice low, how it was that for the molimo,
534 which was so sacred to them, they should use water piping stolen
123 from roadside construction gangs, instead of using the traditional ma-
177 terials.

Evidently now that they had the trumpets in their possession there was no longer any need for silence, for they answered calmly and loudly with a counter-question. "What does it matter what the molimo is made of? This one makes a great sound, and, besides, it
[322] does not rot like wood. It is much trouble to make a wooden one, and then it rots away and you have to make another."

[825] Ausu, to prove how well it sounded, took the end of the longer
[533] pipe, which evidently belonged to Manyalibo, and all of a sudden the forest was filled with the sound of trumpeting elephants. The others clapped their hands with pleasure and said, "You see? Doesn't it sound well?"

My conservative feelings were still wounded, however, and it gave me some pleasure to see the difficulty the Pygmies had on the way back, carrying a fifteen-foot length of drainpipe through the forest. It was pitch dark now, though the moon was full, yet we still followed only the smallest animal trails, this being the quickest route. Frequently Madyadya, carrying the front end of his foster-father's trumpet, turned too sharply, following the trail, so that whoever was carrying the rear end was forced off the path and the trumpet became jammed between two trees. But in spite of these mishaps we returned almost as quickly as we had come.

When we came to the first stream we all stopped. The moonlight was just strong enough for me to see both trumpets laid carefully in the water, then lifted up so that the water ran through from end to end. "The molimo likes to drink," I was told. We washed our feet and continued, but at every stream we came to the performance was repeated, both trumpets being immersed and allowed to "drink." Every now and again, whoever was at the rear end of a trumpet

765 534 123 177 managed to find enough breath to blow a long blast that was sometimes musical, but more often not. The younger Pygmies all seemed anxious to have a turn, but Ausu, who was the only one who really knew how to play, kept aloof. He ran ahead of us all, silently, into the night.

765 123 481 It was so dark along the trails that I had to run barely two feet behind whoever was in front, occasionally reaching out and touching him to make sure he was still there. I had learned to lift my feet high to avoid roots, but I did not know the trails inch by inch, as the Pygmies did, and once I put my foot in an animal hole and fell. But nobody stopped, and I had to run all the faster to catch up.

765 534 123 [322] Only at the streams was there enough light for us to see each other dimly; and at each stream I looked at those two drainpipes being lovingly washed and fed with water. I was curious as to how far this was a ritual act, and how far it was originally a practical measure that would make a wooden trumpet swell, closing any possible cracks, so that it would sound better. Ausu said that of course that was why they did it, they did the same thing to all their wooden whistles and flutes as well; it made their voices stronger. Then he added casually, "We know it makes no difference to the sound of the metal trumpet, but we do it anyway."

When we reached the top of the hill that descends, gently at first, then steeply, into the Lelo River, we all halted and stood in the glade. It was lit with silvery patches of light, shining here and there uncertainly, where the moonlight found its way down through the rustling trees. Even the darker shadows glowed every now and then, but with a strange natural luminosity that came from the mushroom-shaped nests of the termites. We could hear the Lelo swishing below, and on the far side of the river voices from the camp floated lazily across to us, as though we were gods and they were mortals, infinitely far away.

765 534 We stood there for a moment. Then Ausu took the end of the

765 long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder,
534 pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night
765 was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpet-
534 533 ing shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp
825 across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again,
and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby.
[201] One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies
frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly."
He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his
own.

765 Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great
533 singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without
156 saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes
781 534 had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or
playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be see-
ing something quite different from what was going on in front of
[825] them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and
gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and
growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the
plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song,
transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of
men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

765 He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to
534 the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and
123 waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream.
[533] They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our
765 way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were stand-
562 ing up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing
what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The
[858] voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The
children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

pulled across the entrances to the little huts, and only the men were 765
left outside. 562

Njobo was there to greet us, and the first thing he asked was 123
whether I had been able to keep up with the others, or if I had 186
"walked like the BaNgwana." He then turned to the others with an 481
obvious "I told you so" air and said, "You see, it is all right; he knows how to walk." This apparently slight compliment was in fact a very real one, because to the Pygmy it is one of the most important differences between the people of the forest and the people of the village that the latter do *not* know "how to walk." Walking, to the Pygmy, means being able to run swiftly and silently, without slipping, tripping or falling. Every day he depends for his food on his ability to "walk," and more than once his life will be saved by the same ability, when he has to run from a charging buffalo or creep away unnoticed from a sleeping leopard.

Masisi, unbelieving, asked if I had not fallen at least once, and
when he was told I had, he roared with laughter. Masimongo, who [522]
had been another to object to my going, pointed to my torn clothes, dripping with water and perspiration, and filthy where I had fallen, and he too laughed. Nobody mentioned the molimo.

Kenge came up and asked disapprovingly why I had gone off so 115
quickly without telling him. He said he had cooked dinner and now 123
it was all cold and I would have to go without. He gave my clothes 122
a withering look and said he would wash them out the next day, and that I had better take them off now and get dry. I went over to my hut and changed, and when I came out he had a piping hot meal waiting by a blazing fire.

What followed that evening was to follow every evening for the 765
next two months. It was the focal point of the molimo festival, and the repetition every night was an essential part of it. The ceremony, if you can call it that, did not center around ritual objects, as do the

765 ceremonies of the local Negro tribes, nor did it follow any prescribed ritualistic details beyond a general over-all pattern. [534] It was plain that [778] the molimo trumpets were not considered as highly sacred objects in themselves; what was important, for some reason, was the sound [186] they produced. It was also very clear that the people of the forest wanted to be quite sure that the village world was well sealed off, because before the men gathered together that evening I found that the path leading out of the camp toward the village had been closed. A fallen branch and some logs had been dragged across it, shutting out the profane outside world.

The molimo of the Pygmies is not concerned with ritual or magic. In fact, it is so devoid of ritual, expressed either in action or words, that it is difficult to see what it *is* concerned with. Every day, around midday, a couple of youths would go around the camp, just as they had done this day, collecting offerings of food and firewood from hut to hut, for the molimo concerns everyone, and everyone must contribute. And each evening the women and children shut themselves up in their huts after the evening meal, for the molimo is mainly the concern of the men. And when the women have retired the men sit around the kumamolimo—the hearth of the molimo—and gaze into the molimo fire. Nearby a basket hangs, full of the offerings of food that will be eaten later. But first the men must sing, for this is the real work of the molimo, as they say; to eat and to sing, to eat and to sing. Yet behind these apparently simple outer trappings of the festival there was an atmosphere of almost overwhelming expectancy.

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533
534 That first night, after I had eaten my meal, I went over to the molimo fire, halfway between Manyalibo's hut and that of his daughter Kondabate and her husband Ausu, where the men were already gathering. I noticed that Amabosu, the singer, was not there. I knew why when, a few minutes after the singing had begun, I heard the voice of the molimo answering, way off by itself in the forest. It

no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe in- 765
stead of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see 533
it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As 534
the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their
song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere
at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls,
and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were
safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya [481]
came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp,
picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they
seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right
up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the
trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled
softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given 765
a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths 534
stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the 372
song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands [533]
and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the
molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of
the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and
some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder
and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing
into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once 765
and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the 534
direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped 765
singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the 264
fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind [252]
of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together [262]
they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as
to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

● 765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished
before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told,
however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed
to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Apparently
765 one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
688 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he
showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under
each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the
stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then
his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would
be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the
forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they
would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing
man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet
was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it
was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman
should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds
it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women
thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment
could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more
beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
539 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

heard such a Beautiful Song that he had to go and see who was singing. 765
When he found the Bird he brought it back to the camp to feed 533
it. His father was annoyed at having to give food to the Bird, but 539 825
the son pleaded and the Bird was fed. The next day the Bird sang again; it sang the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and again the boy went to it and brought it back to feed it. This time the father was even more angered, but once again he gave in and fed the Bird. The third day (most Pygmy stories repeat themselves at least three times) the same thing happened. But this time the father took the Bird from his son and told his son to go away. When his son had left, the father killed the Bird, the Bird with the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and with the Bird he killed the Song, and with the Song he killed himself and he dropped dead, completely dead, dead for ever.

There are other legends about song, all telling how important 765
it is, and I wondered just why. I looked at the others sitting with me 533
around the kumamolimo. The flames from the fire flickered, lighting up the serious faces, shining brightly in their large, honest eyes. Some gazed straight into the fire, others leaned back and looked up into the trees as they sang. A few lay down on their hunting nets,
but they were awake and they sang with the rest. Then I saw that [854]
Makubasi had his infant son on his lap, holding the boy tightly against him, wrapped in his powerful arms, rocking backward and forward. He was singing quietly, with his mouth up against his son's ear. The words of the song, like the words of most molimo songs, were few. They simply said, "The Forest is Good."

The Pygmies seemed bound by few set rules. There was a general 765
pattern of behavior to which everyone more or less conformed, but [183]
with great latitude given and taken. Even on this occasion, when all [854]
women and children were supposed to be abed, if Makubasi felt like getting his son and singing to him at the kumamolimo, nobody
objected or thought anything of it. Possibly this was because the [533]

765 baby was too young to know what was going on, and so could not
533 tell the others what he saw; possibly simply because it did not matter very much anyway, for the Song was not only Beautiful, it was Good and Powerful.

It took me some time to realize just how important song was. That first night I just thought of it as being a beautiful sound. After we had eaten the food that had been offered to the molimo we sang again, and at one point the younger men got up and danced around the fire, excitedly, but without any of the frivolity that would come later. This was the first night of the molimo and everyone was on his best behavior. Then when the dancing was over we heard the trumpet again, and as we sang it sang back to us, getting farther and farther away. As it went it carried our song with it, deeper and deeper into the forest. Finally we could hear it no more, and only the echoes of our own voices came back to us from the night.

765 Not long after that old Moke stretched and yawned and said
533 that he was tired and that everyone should go to sleep and let him
513 sleep. But the younger men paid no attention and went on singing, so Moke resignedly joined in. But after another half-hour, when it was not very long before dawn, even the younger men decided to
[372] quit. Moke picked up the log he had been sitting on, the end of
[373] which was glowing in the hot ashes, and shuffled back to his hut, swinging the log so that it glowed brightly and lit his way across the camp. Manyalibo simply stretched out where he was, right beside the molimo fire, and went to sleep there. A number of youths did likewise, their hunting nets making comfortable beds, but I went back to my hut. I found Kenge there, fast asleep. He was on my bed, wrapped in my blanket, snoring contentedly, and the hut was filled with smoke from the fire he had lit beside him.

765 533 In spite of the hunting that had to be done each day, the men
578 688 sang in this way every night. And every night we looked to see who

would come from Cephu's camp, for the amount of interest that 765
Cephu showed in the molimo was a topic for constant discussion 533
and criticism. Masimongo, who had relatives in Cephu's camp, 578
always upheld him when he did not appear himself or when his little 688
group made a poor showing. But Manyalibo allowed no such excuses, and his voice carried much more weight. He said, good conservative that he was, that all men should take part in the molimo regardless of what camp they belonged to, if they were anywhere near at all. Then he went through the mime showing what would have happened in the old days, to anyone who did not attend and was found sleeping. I thought momentarily of Kenge.

But the molimo was not only a matter of singing late into the 765
night. Each morning, too, there was activity, though of a different 533
nature. The evenings were serious, the older men taking the lead 535
in the singing and leaving the dancing largely to the younger men. 88
Sometimes there was a lot of horseplay, but the older men, like Moke, kept an eye on what was going on and held the youngsters in check. Often the molimo fire was made into two fires, the older men sitting at one and the youngsters at the other, and then all the dancing went on at the youths' fire while the elders sat at theirs and just sang, and watched their sons with dreamy eyes.

But in the mornings the youths came into their own completely. 765
Before the first glimmer of light filtered through into the camp, 882
those of us who had managed to get to sleep were waked by a violent 533
and raucous trumpeting from just outside the camp. This brought 534
cries of protest from the older men. Some of them appeared sleepily at the entrance to their huts and shouted, "Animal! Go away and keep quiet and let me sleep!" but to no avail. From the far end of the camp, near the path leading to Cephu's clearing, a wild cavalcade of youths swept into view, shouting and yelling, clustered so thickly that it was impossible to see the trumpet they were carrying. But it was there, with Amabosu blowing it. It blasted and shrilled and

765 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturn-
882 ing any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the
534 remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to
533 wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used
688 to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm,
536 pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he
688 went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening
183 singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the
115
123 camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being
578 too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

765
each time, at the time, he never brought it up later as an issue for 578
discussion or dispute. One morning, after two brothers, Masalito 765
and Aberi, had been fighting, the "animal of the forest," making 578
more noise than ever, circled all around Masalito's hut and finally 825
pounced on it, beating on the roof and tearing off leaves and sticks. [593]
Some of the youths climbed up a tree that overhung the hut and broke off a heavy branch, which fell on the hut, blocking the entrance, but doing no real damage. The couple inside screamed their protests; then there was a sudden silence. Masalito had done the most dreadful thing of all. He had told the youths to take "that animal" away and throw it back in the water and stop all their noise. This spoiled the whole illusion, which is only a pretense in itself, that the women think that the molimo is an animal and do not know that it is a trumpet surrounded by a lot of noisy youths. The silence was followed by cries from all over the camp—cries of shame shouted by both men and women. The "animal" was galvanized into even greater action, and Masalito's hut was in danger of being completely destroyed. Then Njobo came sleepily out into the clearing and told the youths to go away. They had probably had their fill by then anyway, and they left, making a few last defiant noises, some in the direction of Njobo. As soon as they were gone the women came out of their huts, looked around to see how much damage had been done, then went to wash themselves and get breakfast. Children scampered around the irate Masalito as he cleared up the wreckage outside his hut, and as they danced up and down I heard one of them, bolder than the others, give a tiny hoot in imitation of the trumpet. Masalito tried to grab the child but they all ran away, laughing, to torment someone else.

For a month I sat every evening at the kumamolimo; listening, 123
watching, and feeling—above all, feeling. If I still had little idea 765
of what was going on, at least I felt that air of importance and

123 expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up,
• 765 pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest";
[562] every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending
[825] they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals; every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted, and about which only I was ignorant.

765 It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the
533 fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings
535 wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and
781 the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied
[825] about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

765 The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they
534 seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been
[522] washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

know what was going on. Eventually the trumpet was found some 765 534
distance downstream, full of sand and gravel and mud.

But that night, in spite of its prosaic experience, it was a myste- 765
rious thing again, alive and awe-inspiring and wonderfully beautiful; 781
something that made the eyes of young and old alike light up with
pleasure as they heard it sing. And, as always, there was that look
in Amabosu's eyes as he worked his magic with the drainpipe. He
was no longer Amabosu; he had some other personality totally dif-
ferent, and distant.

One day, when I was beginning to wonder if I would ever find 123
out what it was all about, I was out with Kenge and his half-brother, 484
Maipe. We had left at dawn, as we wanted to go to a distant part
of the forest, about five hours' walk if one carried no load, and re-
turn by nightfall. About halfway there, far to the north of the Lelo
and near the great falls of the Kare River, we stopped for a rest. We
were in an *idu*, a small natural clearing used by the forest animals
as a salt lick. For some reason we started talking about water and I 123
asked again why the molimo trumpets always drank when they 822
765
crossed a stream. Maipe, who seldom said much, said, as Ausu had, 534
that they always gave wooden trumpets water to drink because it [322]
made them sound better. So, he said, it had become a custom and
they still followed it even if the trumpet was metal. I then asked
why the trumpets were kept in water and was again given a practical
answer—it was the easiest place to hide them. I finally arrived at
the question I had been leading up to—what happened to the mo-
limo trumpets at the end of a festival? Did they go back to live in
the water?

This struck both Maipe and Kenge as terribly funny. They said 765
certainly not; if the trumpets were kept in the water always they 534
would rot right away and everyone would be spending all their time 824
making new ones instead of hunting. Without any further prompting 322

765 they went on to tell me how the trumpets are normally made, from
534 the young straight molimo tree, a tree with a soft center that can be
322 [824] bored out laboriously, using different vines and woods as drills, twisting them between the palms of the hands. It took a very long time, they said, but this was the real molimo, and its voice was the best of all. Njobo used to have such a trumpet, but it had rotted away, and now all he had was a short bamboo one.

765 Kenge told me that the trumpet which Masimongo owned had
534 originally belonged to Kenge's father, Adenota, and by rights be-
422 longed to him. But he said he couldn't be bothered with it. "It costs too much, and it makes too much work. Always going around collecting food to feed everyone. . . ." He shook his head in disgust. He had given it to Masimongo when Masimongo married his sister. He could have it back if he wanted, or he could make another, but it was all really too much trouble.

765 Maipe said nothing, but after a while, when we were moving off,
534 he asked me if I would like to see the sleeping place of a trumpet.
123 He led me along an antelope trail, so low that I had to go almost
[487] on hands and knees. It followed the banks of a stream and the mon-
[139] gongo plants grew thickly. After a while the stream descended a slope in small cascades, and the undergrowth cleared. We stood up and saw that water was all around us, rippling over rocks and coming together at the bottom in a sizable pool. Maipe looked around, then walked surely into a patch of undergrowth and called me. I found him at the foot of a tall tree, the base of which was hidden by thick
[824] bush. Through the bush ran a vine, looped around the tree about
[784] three feet off the ground. Maipe said that any Pygmy seeing that would know that it marked the sleeping place of a molimo trumpet and would keep away, for it did not concern him and the molimo should not be disturbed while sleeping. I asked where the trumpet was, and Maipe pointed up above his head. I could see nothing except the immense branches of the tree spreading out high above,

more than a hundred feet up. "That is where it sleeps," he said. 765 534
"It is safe there. It sleeps there until it is needed." 123

I asked when it was needed, but Maipe had said all he was going to say. He looked up at the tree for a last time, then motioned with
his head that we should be on our way. Kenge whispered to me that 765
when we got back he would ask Moke to tell me more. It was better 534 123
for old men to talk about these things. 554

That same night, just before the singing started, Moke was sitting 888 115
outside his hut, whittling away at a new bow he was making, and [322]
talking to himself because there was nobody else for him to talk to. [411]
Kenge had spoken to him when we got back to the camp at dusk, but I did not expect anything to come of it, and Kenge had said nothing to me. Moke looked up and stared in my direction, then he looked back at his bow and continued whittling away with a rough stone. But he spoke a little louder, so that I would hear.

"Ebamunyama," he said, using the name I had been given, "*pika'i to.*" ("Come here.") [551]

He spoke as if he was addressing the bow, and when I got to him he still did not look up but just told me to sit down. Talking to the bow in his soft old voice, he said that he had been told I was asking about the molimo, and that this was a good thing and he would tell me whatever he could.

He went on to tell that the Pygmies call out their molimo whenever things seem to be going wrong. "It may be that the hunting is bad," he said, "or that someone is ill, or, as now, that someone has died. These are not good things, and we like things to be good. So we call out the molimo and it makes them good, as they should be."

Kind, quiet old Moke, all alone and without a wife to look after 115
him, still working away at his bow, occasionally looking along the [157]
shank to make sure he was keeping the line true—he told me many things that evening. But, most important, he told me, or rather

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps 115 778
only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So 776
how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must 781
be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So 182
when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest 778
world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo 765 •
songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has 533
died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he 123
had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand 778
what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was [534]
carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

5

The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter

765 EVERY NIGHT the men gathered to sing the songs of the molimo,
533 and every morning the youths awakened the camp with their shouts
and yells. This went on week after week, yet the daily life of the
hunting group continued as though nothing particularly unusual was
[152] happening. The men were more sleepy in the mornings, and some-
times tempers were short, but never for long. The necessities of hunting and gathering for a living did not allow it.

512 As soon as the camp was light and there was no further danger of the molimo's making an appearance, the women emerged from their huts and went down to the river to bathe and to collect water

selfish magic. Moke threw the horns in a fire and no more was said. 224 777
It so happened that the family in question continued to have good
luck for some time.

Hunting, for a Pygmy group, is a co-operative affair—net-hunting 224
particularly. The use of private magic is frowned on, though there
is no law against it. The sacred hunting fire is all that they consider [372]
right and necessary, and this is found throughout the forest. It is thought to secure the blessing of the forest which provides the game, and to bring good luck to the entire group. Even those groups that hunt mainly with bow and arrow, hunt not as individuals, but for the group as a whole. For the net hunters it is impossible to hunt alone. Men, women and children all have to co-operate if the hunt is to be successful.

The "Fire of the Hunt" simply involves the lighting of a fire at 224
the base of a tree a short distance from the camp. In other Pygmy 372
groups I have seen a variation in which the fire is lighted within the camp, special sticks around it pointing in the direction the hunt is going to take. In this case the fire is surrounded by a long and heavy vine laid in a circle on the ground, and when the game is brought home it is placed within this circle before being divided. But this particular group, and others in the area, were less formal.

I remember one morning in particular when we went to kindle the Fire of the Hunt outside the camp, because it was the day that old Cephu committed one of the greatest sins possible in the forest.

I doubt if any of us had managed to snatch more than two hours' 765 •
sleep, and we were all quiet while preparing for the hunt. In a Pygmy 578
camp this is the surest danger signal of all, for usually everyone is talk- 152
ing and laughing and shouting rude remarks from one end of the camp to the other. It was not only that we were tired, but of late Cephu had refused to contribute to the molimo basket, and that morning he had been heard to call out, in his loudest voice, that he was fed up with the molimo of "that camp over there." Even though he always

765 Even though he[1] always
578 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.
[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[1] [i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

224 This dance[1] was still in progress when the main body of the hunters
578 returned. They strode into camp with glowering faces and threw
152 their nets on the ground outside their huts. Then they sat down,
156 with their chins in their hands, staring into space and saying nothing.
The women followed, mostly with empty baskets, but they were by no means silent. They swore at each other, they swore at their husbands, and most of all they swore at Cephu. Moke looked across at me and smiled. He was skinning the civet.

I tried to find out what had happened, but nobody would say. Kenge, who had been sleeping, came out of our hut and joined the shouting. He was the only male who was not sitting down, and although he was young he had a powerful voice, and a colorful use of language. I heard him saying, "Cephu is an impotent old fool. No, he isn't, he is an impotent old animal—we have treated him like a man for long enough, now we should treat him like an animal. *Animal!*" He shouted the final epithet across at Cephu's camp, although Cephu had not yet returned.

The result of Kenge's tirade was that everyone calmed down and began criticizing Cephu a little less heatedly, but on every possible score: The way he always built his camp separately, the way he had even referred to it as a separate camp, the way he mistreated his relatives, his general deceitfulness, the dirtiness of his camp, and even his own personal habits.

The rest of the hunters came in shortly afterward, with Cephu leading. He strode across the camp and into his own little clearing
[765] without a word. Ekianga and Manyalibo, who brought up the rear,
sat down at the kumamolimo and announced to the world at large that Cephu had disgraced them all and that they were going to tear down the kumamolimo and abandon the camp and end the molimo. Manyalibo shouted that he wanted everyone to come to the kumamolimo at once, even Cephu. This was a great matter and had to be settled immediately. Kenge, not slow to seize the opportunity

[1] [i.e., the imitation of the leopard--Analyst]

224 Manyalibo stood up and began a rather pompous statement of
765 how everyone wanted this camp to be a good camp, and how everyone
578 wanted the molimo to be a good molimo, with lots of singing,
156 lots of eating, and lots of smoking. But Cephu never took part in the molimo, he pointed out. And Cephu's little group never contributed to the molimo basket. Manyalibo went on, listing the various ways in which Cephu had defaulted and made the camp into a bad camp instead of a good camp, and the molimo a bad molimo. And now, he added, Cephu had made the hunt a bad hunt. He recalled how on the first day, even before the camp was built, we had been presented with an antelope by the forest, but how ever since Cephu had joined us things had gone from bad to worse.

224 Cephu tried to interject that the molimo was really none of his
765 business. At this Masisi, who had befriended him over the chair
578 incident, and who had relatives in his camp, rounded on him sharply.
156
593 He reminded Cephu that he had been glad enough to accept help and food and song when his daughter had died; now that his "mother" had died, why did he reject her? Cephu replied that Balekimito was not his mother. This was what everyone was waiting for. Not only did he name the dead woman, an unheard-of offense,
[602] but he denied that she was his mother. Even though there was only
[621] the most distant relationship, and that by marriage, it was equivalent to asserting that he did not belong to the same group as Ekianga and Manyalibo and the rest.

578 Ekianga leaped to his feet and brandished his hairy fist across the
156 fire. He said that he hoped Cephu would fall on his spear and kill
152 himself like the animal he was. Who but an animal would steal meat
224 from others? There were cries of rage from everyone, and Cephu
224 burst into tears. Apparently, during the last cast of the nets Cephu,
578 who had not trapped a single animal the whole day long, had slipped
156 away from the others and set up his net in front of them. In this way

224 156 emptied. Then each of the other huts was searched and all the meat
558 taken. Cephu's family protested loudly and Cephu tried hard to
626 cry, but this time it was forced and everyone laughed at him. He
clutched his stomach and said he would die; die because he was
hungry and his brothers had taken away all his food; die because he
was not respected.

765 The kumamolimo was festive once again, and the camp seemed
621 restored to good spirits. An hour later, when it was dark and fires
264 were flickering outside every hut, there was a great blaze at the
central hearth and the men talked about the morrow's hunt. From
[201] Cephu's camp came the sound of the old man, still trying hard to
cry, moaning about his unfortunate situation, making noises that
were meant to indicate hunger. From our own camp came the jeers
of women, ridiculing him and imitating his moans.

[602] When Masisi had finished his meal he took a pot full of meat
with mushroom sauce, cooked by his wife, and quietly slipped away
into the shadows in the direction of his unhappy kinsman. The moaning stopped, and when the evening molimo singing was at its height
[516] I saw Cephu in our midst. Like most of us he was sitting on the
[829] ground, in the manner of an animal. But he was singing, and that
meant that he was just as much a BaMbuti as anyone else.

But at the central fireplace there was always a basket of food, P
showing that it was a kumamolimo, the only outward indication that 765 •
the God of the Forest had been invoked and was waiting silently [776]
nearby, in the trees or in the Lelo itself, ready to enter the camp at night and join his people in their songs of joy and praise. The casual observer might have thought the youngsters were playing a game when they went around from hut to hut with a fishing line and a basket, collecting food from everyone. There was certainly nothing about their demeanor to indicate that this was an essential part of a great act of communion. And if the same observer were told that this was so, he would probably form the opinion that the molimo, whatever it was, could not mean very much if it was treated so lightly and casually.

This, in fact, is the opinion of the villagers. For them the ritual C
act is the important thing. 765 In their religious rites it is the correct performance of the ceremonial that counts most. If correctly performed it is bound to bring the desired results, regardless of the accompanying thought, if indeed there is any. All attention is focused on the act itself. And it must not only be performed correctly, but with a solemnity that betrays fear.

The difference between the two attitudes is perhaps one of those P C
fine shades of difference that divide magic from religion, though 765
there is so much overlapping that they can seldom be divided in 771
practice. Whereas the villagers believe that the act itself brings about 789 P
results in a way they cannot explain, which is what we call magic, 778
the BaMbuti do not believe this at all. They believe in a benevolent deity or supernatural power which they identify with the forest. To this they owe as much respect and affection and consideration as they owe to their own parents, and from it they can expect the same in return. So, for the Pygmies, it is not so much the act itself that P
counts, or the manner in which the act is performed, but the thought 765
that goes with it. The collecting of food from hut to hut is not a 771

765 771 magical act but a way of emphasizing that this is something in which every single member of the group must participate.

765 562 At first I had thought that the molimo was virtually the sole concern of the men. In the evenings, when the singing first started, there were sometimes a few girls who stood nearby and danced among themselves as we sang, but they were soon sent to join the rest of the women and children in their huts—certainly long before the molimo made its appearance. But one day I felt that something different was going on.

881 765 I had noticed that Kondabate, Manyalibo's daughter, who was married to Ausu, was building an extension at the back of her hut. She and Ausu had no children, and when I asked her why she was enlarging her home she said there was going to be an *elima,* and that all the girls would stay in her hut, under her care. An elima is a celebration that takes place when a girl reaches maturity, as marked by the first appearance of menstrual blood. At such a time she enters a special hut with her girl friends and stays there for a month. But I had heard none of the usual discussion about the event, and I felt this could not be the full answer.

765 574 888 Then, that afternoon, an old, old woman arrived with her husband. They stopped first in Cephu's camp, where they had relatives, but then came on into the main camp, where they were received with the greatest respect. The husband sat down at the kumamolimo and was offered food; the old woman disappeared into Kondabate's house. She stayed there until evening, but all I could hear from inside were occasional snatches of song. It was plain that there were several girls in there as well, and it sounded as though they were either being taught new songs or else rehearsing songs they already knew. They never sang more than a few bars at a time, and I was continually being startled, thinking that I heard something resembling one of the molimo songs.

765 888 That evening the old man joined us for the molimo singing. He

was given special recognition by Moke, who offered him his chair 765
and then sat on the ground beside him. Old Tungana seemed to 888
know him well too. The elders—the *mangese,* the Great Ones— 765
formed a tight cluster of their own, apart from the hunters. The 561
hunters formed their own group, and the youths theirs. The youths 562
and a few of the hunters danced, and we were surrounded by women 535
and girls who watched and joined the songs with handclaps. The
girls formed their own dance circles, but they seemed to be dancing
with much more purpose than on other nights, and they were allowed
to stay up much later. Then they were sent to bed, and the
singing began in earnest. All the girls who had danced went into
Kondabate's hut, and as they opened the leaf door to enter I saw
that the old woman was sitting inside, hunched up over the fire, her
eyes as bright as the coals, wide and unblinking.

The singing went on particularly late that night, and it was only 765
an hour after Moke's usual statement that he was tired that we were
awakened by the blasting of both molimo trumpets as they entered
the camp. I got up hurriedly and saw that Kenge was already gone.
At the door of my hut someone ran up in the dusk and pushed me [123]
back, telling me not to come out, it was too dangerous. Just as he
said this, there was a tremendous blow on top of the hut, and the
molimo swept by. It was surrounded by at least twenty youths, all,
as far as I could see, carrying long branches with which they beat
on the roofs and walls of every hut. They continued this for an hour,
the trumpets blaring angrily, the youths making loud hunting cries.
As the forest grew lighter I could see that all the youths were decorated
with leafy branches stuck in their belts, so that it looked as
though each trumpet was surrounded by a little forest of its own.

Quite a number of huts had been damaged, but there was no word 765
of protest. Ekianga danced up and down with a spear under each arm 535
and ran rings around the trumpets. I was more impressed than ever 481
by the high-stepping gait that he and everyone else used. They did

765 535 481 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 533 372 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one, went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tentative, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 152 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge. Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, 765
go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were 152
two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the 765
camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each 533
hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was com- [372]
pletely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and
the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Konda-
bate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their [302]
bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined [301]
circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over
their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end.
They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in 765
unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so 535
close together that I could not see between them. They danced all
around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snak-
ing, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing
the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all
stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the 765
women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire 562
of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all
sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night.
It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great head- [142]
dress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than [292]

765 ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it
562 seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her
142 [292] knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in
ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

765 Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped
562 scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two
832 years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and
[304] trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally
765 wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down
562 opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking
152 up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

765 After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then
562 with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the
533 sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with
765 just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized
562 the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent mo-
535 limo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the
[534] banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those of Kondabate. 765 562 535

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken. 765 562 535 533

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un- [372]

765 observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced
562 the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She
535 advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back,
533 her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster,
372 but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the
765 ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the
562 fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to
535 her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there,
372 staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down.
[533] Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but 765
never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller 562
and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood 535
proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were 372
out in front. [533] Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a
more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each [831]
time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men
gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated 765
among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and 562

765 562 the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

765 562 773 There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned" the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

562 [462] The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

562 372 182 But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

765 533 I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again, and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

765
ing in the shadows, until with surprisingly swift and agile strides 533
she was once more in our midst. In her hands she held a long roll of 765
nkusa twine. The men continued singing, and as they sang, the old 533
woman went around knotting a loop around each man's neck, so 824
that in the end we were all tied together. The men made no attempt [284]
to resist; rather, they ignored what was going on. When they were
all tied in this way, however, they stopped singing.

Moke spoke—I am not sure whether it was for my benefit or 765
because it was his place to say what he did. He said, "This woman has tied us up. She has bound the men, bound the hunt, and bound the molimo. We can do nothing." Then Manyalibo said that we had to admit we had been bound, and that we should give the woman something as a token of our defeat; then she would let us go. A certain quantity of food and cigarettes was agreed upon, and the old woman solemnly went among us again, untying each man. Nobody attempted to loose himself, but as each man was untied he began to sing once more—the molimo was free. The old woman received her gifts and went back to Cephu's camp, where she and her husband were staying. The couple stayed for another week or two, but she danced only once again. Before she left us she went to every man, giving him her hand to touch as though it were some kind of blessing.

It was not long after this that everyone started talking about when they should bring the molimo to an end. There seemed to be no specific length of time that it should run, and it was just a question of convenience.

There was the matter of the elima to be considered, too, as evi- 881
dently one really was due to be held for two girls, each of whom
had reached her first period. The main problem was not the fulfilling
of ritual necessities, but rather how to make the most of the festive
occasion. There were different schools of thought as to whether 881
the elima should take place in the village or the forest; the younger 177

881 men held out for the village, the older for the forest. All the older
177 men except Tungana, that is. That wily old grandfather thought
881 the village was better as they might be able to make money out of
177 tourists who would pay to see them dance. Tourists had been increasing
609 in number ever since the Animal Station had been established at Epulu, and the Pygmies found tourists even easier to trick than villagers.

881 It was eventually decided that the elima, which had already begun
177 in Kondabate's hut, should go to the village and take over Ekianga's house, as it was the biggest and he was related to one of the girls anyway. The villagers would give food to the elima. Asofalinda would be in charge. Everyone else would stay a while longer in the forest.
• [765] Then they would bring the molimo to the village one night and have a final dance there, because the villagers believed that a period of mourning, which is how they regarded the molimo, should end with a ritual feast, and so they would give the Pygmies more food. That would put all the men in a good humor to attend to their part of the elima festivities.

765 I was a little surprised that they should even think of bringing the
177 molimo to the village. Moke told me not to worry, that no villagers would know anything of what went on in the forest, and if any villagers came to watch they would only see the Pygmies imitating what the villagers do themselves. But he shook his head and added, "Even so, it *is* bad. It is a thing of the forest, and it should end there. Perhaps we shall have to end it twice."

361 The night before we were due to move back to the village every-
152 one was very quiet. The women prepared the food for the evening
[521] meal without talking to one another. Tungana sat outside his hut, hunched forward, his gray old head resting on one hand because he had an abscess on the side of his neck. Moke wandered restlessly from one end of the camp to the other, and Masisi snapped at every-
361 one who gave him an excuse. This was some three months after

883
177 would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and
921 buy themselves beer."
[273] "And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

554 Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who
521 was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself
[152] up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you
[765] spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo
at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

765 This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

765 The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been.
533 The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it
[535] with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

ing us as gently as the breeze. When he had finished he stood by 765
the fire and sang to the forest by himself, with the molimo answering 533
from a great distance, getting fainter and fainter. Finally they were both singing so quietly that I could hardly distinguish their music from the music of the crickets and the frogs and the birds of the night. Somewhere a hyrax gave its throaty, rasping call of despair, [136]
and an owl hooted. Moke sat down, and nobody spoke, and nobody sang. Something wonderful had come into our lives and filled them [152]
with the magic of love and trust, and though we still possessed that love and trust, we regretted the going of the power that had brought it.

At dawn we were awakened as usual by the sound of the two 765
trumpets. But there was a quality about their tone that was harsh 534
and brash. We all knew that the real molimo had gone, but we had 177
to go through with the final ritual for the benefit of the villagers. The bellowings did not last long, and soon the trumpets disappeared in the direction of the village with a bunch of noisy youths in attendance. Later, when the main body of the camp was packed up and ready to leave, one of the youths came running back and told us with great excitement what fun they had had frightening the villagers with the molimo, but that now it was safely hidden in the forest, on the outskirts of the village.

We got a warm reception as we emerged from the plantations 177
among the neat rows of mud houses. The villagers eyed the baskets on the women's backs and tried to estimate how much meat they were bringing. They called out offers of free meals in an attempt to bribe their way into the favor of people whom they theoretically regarded as slaves. As we filed from the leafy plantation, leaving the forest behind us, we left a kind and friendly world and entered a different one. Here, if the world was open to the sky it was also open to greed and suspicion and treachery. Village women attached themselves to "their" Pygmies and tried to pry into the baskets

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought 262
in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return 264 439
for what they had given away they had received generous portions 177
of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter
tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts
in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and chil- 533
dren retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central 571
fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, [345]
or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what [535]
was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They
sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work
in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing.
They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back
in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped.
They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not
caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the 765
molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two 534
youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands 372
high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground,
they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and
imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled
the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it
sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing
as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around,
faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men
who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing
in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they
were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo 765
plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil- 534

765 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud
534 beaten from walls.

765 There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air
533 of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to
781 be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their danc-
[513] ing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house.
765 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air
781 and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire.
535 It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliber-
534
372 ately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it.
[276] He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

on us all and disappeared into his hut. The molimo, surrounded by 765 •
a triumphant entourage, now left the village, and we escorted it 534
back to the forest. Dawn was breaking, streaking the sky with gold
and crimson, and as soon as we had found a suitable temporary hiding place we returned to the village.

It was in a dreadful state of chaos. Black ashes and cinders covered 765
the ground everywhere; manioc plants were uprooted, sugar cane trampled down, chairs smashed, leaves torn off roofs and the mud from many walls crumbled on the ground. The Negro villagers were full of complaints, but in the Pygmy village men and women were silent, sleepily clearing up the wreckage and preparing for the midday feast. Nobles and headmen began arriving from neighboring villages, and as even the four poles that represented the Pygmy baraza had been smashed to the ground, they took possession of my veranda. They had come to supervise the ritual feast which, according to their custom, marked the end of the mourning ceremonies for Balekimito. They were a little surprised to find that the elima occupied the house in which Balekimito had died, but the Pygmies were in no mood to argue. They just shrugged their shoulders and said it was a good house. As far as they were concerned they had finished mourning their personal loss as soon as their mother had
been buried. From then onward they had been fulfilling their duty 761
to the forest by rejoicing with the molimo for the long and good 765
life that had been granted to the old lady. They had acknowledged 372
the gift of the fire of life from the forest, and the forest's right and 778
power to withdraw it; they had acknowledged and accepted the facts of life and death as both being, equally, the gift of their god.

But if the villagers wanted them to have a formal feast to end 765
the mourning, and were willing to give the food, they did not object. 594

The food was cooked and laid out in the center of my veranda, 177
which when the sun was high was the only cool and shady place in the village. This meant that the villagers were pushed to the edge as

P
765 the Pygmies came in to eat. The men came in and sat down and ate
574 without ceremony while their patrons watched hungrily. But they
177 were not related to Balekimito, so they could not partake. Women,
too, were excluded, according to the village rules of the game, but
I saw a number of dishes quietly slipped to one side, and shortly
afterward all the women were enjoying their own feast, concealed
behind the elima hut.

C The villagers asked if everyone had ritually bathed, to wash off
765 the taint of death, and everyone politely said yes. The villagers then
563 asked if the Pygmies had any meat to spare, and the Pygmies equally
P
765 politely said no. They had given it all to the molimo, they said,
177 and to this there was no answer, for it was a very creditable thing to
do, in village eyes. I bought a large quantity of palm wine, however,
and this mollified to some extent the strained feelings of the patrons.
They knew they were being deceived and cheated, yet they felt they
were only doing what was right in trying to impose their beliefs and
practices on the forest savages who had no culture of their own. If
the forest spirits struck the Pygmies down for not having heeded
their patrons, for not having performed all the necessary rituals as
they had been told, then it was not the fault of the villagers. They
drank their fill and departed.

P Once the Negroes had gone we all tried to get some sleep, for it
765 was late afternoon and we had had no rest. But for three months the
512
513 men had sung and danced and feasted every night and for three
months the women and children had been sent to bed early, forbidden to come out and take part in the festivities except for the
dance of the old woman. Now the molimo was over, and the women
P took advantage of the fact. After all, an elima had begun, and that
881 was as important to the women as the molimo was to the men. At
dusk all the girls of the elima came out of their hut. Their beautiful
P
[832] young bodies shone and glistened with the palm oil that had been
carefully rubbed into the skin, making them even more alluring to

881 ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able
885 to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend
224 for themselves.

881 Once a boy has gained access to the elima but he may flirt or
836 even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an opportunity
584 for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and
such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other
881 before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older
836 men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this
elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

881 The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The
771 Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the im-
182 portant thing about any festival is that they should openly express
their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the
• [765] festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the
[533] dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed
as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing
881 in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,
182

er's chances by going to live with Kenge before Yambabo had been 584
well and truly bound to Taphu.

There was only one thing to do, so Kenge made arrangements for 585
Yambabo to leave the next day, with a suitable wedding party. They 177
would stop overnight at Katala's village and continue the next day to Babama. At this point an uncle of Taphu's died, and the Babama villagers sent a message that the wedding was off. Taphu, however, sent word that as far as the Pygmies were concerned the death made no difference and the wedding was on. Kenge did not want to offend the villagers at this stage, so he delayed a few days, and after a
respectable lapse of time he finally sent the wedding party off. But not 585
before Yambabo had had yet another change of mind. As she was [302]
being rubbed with palm oil and camwood paste, so that she would
look her very best, she suddenly reached out for the hearth. Before [765]
anyone could stop her she had covered herself from head to foot in ashes, the sign of deepest mourning. As the rest of the party had already been oiled and painted for some time, and were anxious to be on their way, there was not much sympathy for Yambabo. They told her that if she wanted to walk through the villages like a ghost they did not mind, but one way or another she was going. Masisi, who was acting as her father, gave her a long lecture, during which his wife hurriedly wiped off the ashes and smeared on more oil.

The party finally got off and had a slow and pleasant journey, 585
stopping in each village in the hopes of receiving presents of food 177
and palm wine. It stopped over at Katala's, where the long-suffering [574]
family of Ngoma fed the whole party lavishly, and the next day it arrived at Babama. Yambabo was led through the village to the Pygmies' encampment, but the villagers came hurrying after. They said the wedding could not possibly take place there so soon after the death of a relative and would have to be held in the village. Taphu wandered out of his hut to see what was going on. He was dressed in a dreadful array of cast-off clothes given him by the villagers.

165 372 [276] tine in the least possible time. Sometimes this puff knocks him out; he faints, and falls forward into the fire. Very often there are others up about the same business, who, when they hear the thud, will run over and pull the victim out of the fire, in which case he will survive with bad burn scars. Sometimes, however, no one hears him, and the burns are fatal.

• 765 [764] [273] When a pygmy dies, his kinsmen bury him near the camp. They get bananas or wine ready-made from their Negroes, and a regular bout of wine drinking begins. The members of the deceased's family cover themselves with white pipe clay, and weep and wail for several days. This noisy manifestation of grief is intermittent, and formally controlled. Sometimes they even put it off for two or three days until all the relatives who have been away visiting at other camps can be gathered in. Most of it is done by women, who will weep and wail for a while in concert, then rest together, then weep together again for another spell. Anyone who is really overcome with emotion weeps quietly by him or herself, alone and without interruption.

768 After a few days of this the whole group will break camp and move on to some other site, unless there are strong objections to leaving. In any case, they never return to the grave, and never decorate or touch it.

[P.341-B]